

Endangered Species Act

Congressional Working Group

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CONTACT: [Jill Strait](#)
202-225-5816

ESA Working Group Releases Final Report & Recommendations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Endangered Species Act (ESA) Congressional Working Group, led by Representatives Doc Hastings (WA-04) and Cynthia Lummis (WY-at large), today released its final [Report, Findings and Recommendations](#).

The report is the culmination of the Working Group’s eight-month effort to examine the ESA from a variety of viewpoints and angles, receive input on how the ESA is working and being implemented, and how and whether it could be updated to be more effective for both people and species. The report reflects hundreds of comments from outside individuals and testimony from nearly 70 witnesses who appeared before a Working Group forum and House Natural Resources Committee hearings.

The report concludes that “After more than 40 years, sensible, targeted reforms would not only improve the eroding credibility of the Act, but would ensure it is implemented more effectively for species and people.”

“There is no doubt of the strong and widespread support for helping to protect endangered species. However, our findings clearly show that there is room for improvements and ways to bring this 40-year-old law into the 21st century,” said Rep. Hastings. “Returning focus of the law to species recovery, addressing litigation and settlement reforms, improving state and local participation, and improving science and data are some of the specific areas of improvements on which I believe we can build consensus. I hope this report can further the discussion on the ESA and serve as a starting point as we move forward with sensible and targeted legislative proposals in the coming months.”

“We all agree on our obligation to protect imperiled species. Our Working Group has concluded that the Endangered Species Act needs updating in light of tremendous conservation advances since 1973,” said Rep. Lummis. “The American people have grown by leaps and bounds in their understanding of conservation, their willingness to conserve species, and their ability to conserve species —the ESA needs to grow with them. The ESA is stuck in a litigation driven model. This outdated model hinders the boots on the ground conservation we should be harnessing to actually recover endangered species, not just spout flowery rhetoric about the law in courtrooms. Our report is an exciting opportunity to bring the ESA into the next millennia.”

The report recommends constructive changes to the ESA in the following four categories:

- Ensuring Greater Transparency and Prioritization of ESA with a Focus on Species Recovery and Delisting

- Reducing ESA Litigation and Encouraging Settlement Reform
- Empowering States, Tribes, Local Governments and Private Landowners on ESA Decisions Affecting Them and Their Property
- Requiring More Transparency and Accountability of ESA Data and Science

[Click here](#) for a full list of recommendations and to read the full report.

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<http://esaworkinggroup.hastings.house.gov>