

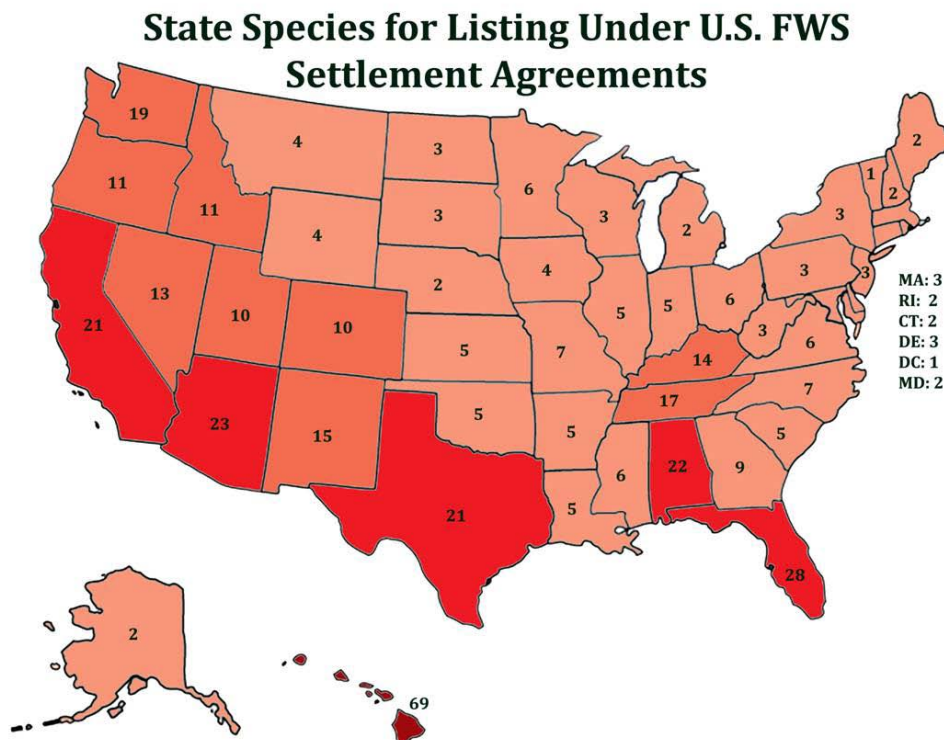
Tuesday, March 6, 2012

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Examining the Financial Impacts of Endangered Species Act Lawsuits and Settlements

Today, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs will hold an [oversight hearing](#) on the FY 2013 budget requests for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As part of Chairman Doc Hastings' ongoing efforts to review the Endangered Species Act (ESA), this hearing is an opportunity to examine how much is being spent on ESA-related activities including litigation and settlement costs.

In July, the Obama Administration agreed to settlements with the Center for Biological Diversity and the WildEarth Guardians that covered petitions to list 779 species and 85 lawsuits and legal actions. These settlements mandate that over 250 candidate species must be reviewed for final listing as either threatened or endangered under the ESA by 2016. As shown on the map below, the settlements could increase the number of species listed in all 50 states, a total increase of 16% by 2016. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service's FY 2013 budget request, as part of the settlement, 88 new final and 47 proposed listing determinations are projected to be completed during this fiscal year.



There are over 200 pending ESA -related lawsuits against the federal government.

Resources and taxpayer dollars that are spent defending these lawsuits are resources that are not going towards recovery efforts.

Last month, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar [confirmed](#) that it is currently unknown how much the Department spends on ESA-related litigation costs.

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House Natural Resources Committee Republican Press Office
Contact: [Crystal Feldman](#), [Spencer Pederson](#) or [Jill Strait](#)
202-226-9019

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