



July 25, 2014

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cynthia Lummis
U.S. House of Representatives
113 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Randy Neugebauer
U.S. House of Representatives
1424 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bill Huizenga
U.S. House of Representatives
1217 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 4315, *Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act*

Dear Chairman Hastings and Representatives Lummis, Neugebauer, and Huizenga:

H.R. 4315, the *Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act*, would provide targeted, common sense improvements to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure it is focused on true species protection and not on endless litigation. Western Energy Alliance, which represents more than 480 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of natural gas and oil across the West, strongly supports the bill.

In recent years, application of the ESA has been plagued by specious lawsuits and deficiencies in scientific data while discouraging the on-the-ground state and local conservation efforts that are more effective at truly protecting endangered species. The Fish & Wildlife Service spends too many resources on top-down process and litigation instead of real species recovery. To compound the problem, plaintiffs who cause scarce federal resources to be diverted from species protection to endless litigation are awarded large sums of taxpayer dollars. Furthermore, the Service often uses information that fails basic scientific standards while refusing to make data available to the public.

This bill meaningfully addresses these issues by increasing the transparency of information and scientific data used in ESA decisions, enhancing state and local participation in the process, reducing frivolous litigation, and capping excessive attorney's fees. We appreciate your leadership and efforts to improve the ESA and strongly support the passage of H.R. 4315.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Sgamma", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kathleen M. Sgamma
Vice President of Government & Public Affairs

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