

# Committee on Resources

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## **Subcommittee Chairman Ken Calvert Opening Statement**

Thirty years ago, Congress had the best intentions when it passed the Endangered Species Act.

In these 30 years, only 7 species out of 1300 listed have been “recovered” and those are mainly due to other species conservation laws. That means that Endangered Species Act has a success rate of .01% at best. But, at the same time, communities across the West are stopped cold in their tracks to the point where some legitimately wonder whether their way of life has become endangered. For instance, entire projects are suddenly scrapped in my district because of the delhi sands flower loving fly or communities and forests are needlessly torched because the Endangered Species Act wouldn't allow for thinning. We are all too aware of the impacts here.

Clearly, something isn't working. No one would ask you to buy 4 new tires for an old car that doesn't run. But, in its current form, that's what the Endangered Species Act is really doing: pouring more money into a broken, tired program and creating more economic hardships for those already caring for their land and experiencing record drought. In the meantime, though, it's lining the pockets of a very few, vocal special interest groups using litigation as a way to achieve their goals.

Today represents an historic opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and bring about positive change for the benefit of the American people and wildlife. We can bring the Endangered Species Act into the 21st Century while helping communities in the Klamath Basin have economic and water certainty. We have already found here -- through peer-reviewed, independent science -- that more water for fish doesn't necessarily mean more fish protections. I just hope we're utilizing that science to its fullest extent.

There's no reason why we can't require -- by law -- independent, peer reviewed science for every major aspect of the Endangered Species Act and use that science to make the best-informed decisions in the decision-making process. This is not a new idea for other federal agencies -- they do it on a daily basis. Everyone should support this effort if they truly care about protecting and recovering endangered species.

Today's hearing -- like our hearing in 2001 -- is a giant, results-oriented leap forward in this march. Next week, we continue when the Resources Committee meets to pass bills -- including Mr. Walden's bill -- that will bring the Endangered Species Act out of the “old school” way of thinking. We owe you -- who have to live with the Endangered Species Act everyday -- nothing less.