

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

August 2017

THE SITUATION



Scientists have shown that **we are on the cusp of the sixth great extinction in Earth's history**, and the first one caused by humans. **The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is America's firewall against mass extinction** - it ensures that land development and other activities are conducted in a way that protects imperiled species and the habitat they need to survive and recover.

WHEN WAS THE LAW ENACTED?

The **ESA passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress** and was signed into law by President Nixon in 1973.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Despite its success and importance in conserving biological diversity, the **ESA has been under attack from industry interests** (big agriculture, ranching, oil and gas, homebuilders) **and their allies in Congress for decades**. These interests believe they should not have to modify their operations to protect American fish, wildlife, and plants. In fact, **Republicans have led more than 120 legislative efforts the past two congresses – bills, amendments and riders – to delist individual species or otherwise undermine the ESA**.

WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

Maintaining biological diversity is critical to sustaining human life on earth. The ecosystems that support other species support us as well, and utilizing these landscapes and associated resources sustainably is critical to the continued survival of our species.

WHAT'S THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT?

If successful, GOP efforts to gut the ESA or delist/block listing of individual species would drive American fish and wildlife to extinction.

This would rob Americans of their natural heritage and reduce biodiversity - leading to higher potential for the spread of disease, destruction of ecosystems that help provide clean air, clean water, and recreational opportunities, and eliminating opportunities to discover lifesaving medicines and economically important compounds.

THE FACTS

90% of Americans **support the ESA**, according to a poll conducted by Tulchin Research in 2016

90% of all ESA listed species are **on track to meet their recovery goals** early or on time (Center for Biological Diversity)

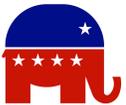
99% of species listed under the ESA have **avoided extinction** (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

Nothing productive. The ESA has not been reauthorized in more than 25 years and budget cuts have delayed species recovery efforts.



Democrats want to see more species delisted, but understand that in order to delist species you must first recover them. Additional resources toward science and recovery efforts are necessary.



While most Republicans say they want to "reform" the ESA so that more species can be removed from the list, the **reality is that they want to gut the Act, delist species one at a time, or get rid of ESA altogether**.

HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

We should be working together to find ways to recover species more quickly and keep others off the list in the first place. **Unfortunately GOP congressional majorities are continuing to push for weakening the ESA**.

democrats-naturalresources.house.gov