

**House Natural Resources Full Committee**  
**July 19, 2017, Legislative Hearing**

***SAVES Act Gohmert Testimony***

- Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to speak on H.R. 2603, the SAVES Act. First, I'd like to thank the committee for considering this legislation, staff, for all their hard work, and, especially, my dear friend Rep. Brian Babin who has worked hand in hand with me on this vital bill.
- This important legislation will remove duplicative and unnecessary regulation, reduce government waste, and enhance conservation
- At the time it was originally enacted, the Endangered Species Act's (ESA) inclusion of nonnative species was well-intentioned, as incipient international regulatory bodies, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which sought to encourage international protections, lacked political capital.
- However, like many other aspects of the ESA, the inclusion of nonnative species is outdated, overly burdensome, and, in fact, works against the very intent of the ESA. Instead of promoting conservation of these international species, this redundant regulation hampers significant non-governmental resources in our country genuinely seeking to enhance conservation of nonnative endangered species through captive breeding programs.
- By restricting interstate movement, listing nonnative species under the ESA renders properly conducted captive breeding a near impossibility. According to the American Federation of Aviculture and their more than 5,000 members, if a collection manager in Missouri would like to bring a new bloodline into their macaw collection from a collection in Pennsylvania, current regulations are so onerous as to bring that plan to a full stop."
- As the Zoological Association of America notes, conservationists often "rely on the ability to move individual animals among collections to best maintain a robust captive population and to provide the best opportunities

for successful breeding of endangered species. The onerous and prohibitive regulation of captive bred, non-native species under the ESA is counter-productive to conservation efforts.”

- Such issues are nothing new with the ESA. Time and time again in the modern world, we see the well-intentioned legislation pit the federal government against the very private citizens who have a vested interest in preserving endangered species. As the US Association of Reptile Keepers asks: “How is making it illegal to share education about ESA-listed and nonnative spotted pond turtles by banning sale of domestically hatched turtles across state lines helpful to conservation of the species?” As Dr. Janice Boyd of The Parrot Fund states so clearly: The ESA simply does not deliver conservation benefits to nonnative species.
- The unfortunate reality of the ESA is that it continuously burdens commerce in various industries. As the National Association of Aquaculture alerted me, just a couple weeks ago, the National Marine Fisheries Service posted a notice seeking public comment on a proposed listing for nonnative giant clams. Several giant clam species are in the marine aquarium trade and U.S.-owned farms in the Pacific are successfully producing these animals. The clams should **not be listed**, and, if they are, the farms producing them will surely decline as interstate movement and commerce will be catastrophically impacted. How is that promoting conservation of the species?!
- Removing unnecessary, outdated, and redundant regulatory authority over interstate movement of nonnative endangered species by removing them from the listing authority of the ESA will enhance conservation and reduce the burden these duplicative regulations have on the industry. Please join me in supporting this common sense solution to conservation of endangered species.