



July 28, 2014

Hon. Doc Hastings  
Chair, Natural Resources Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1203 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 4315, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Endangered Species Transparency Act

Dear Congressman Hastings:

The American Forest Resource Council represents over 60 forest product manufacturers and forest landowners in the five Western states. Because they are the principal utilizers of timber from federal lands, our members are highly impacted by the implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

We want to express our support of your revision to H.R. 4315 to include the text of four previously introduced bills: H.R. 4315 sponsored by yourself, which would require the Secretary of Interior to publish online “the best scientific and commercial data available” that is used in a listing; H.R. 4316, sponsored by Congresswoman Lummis, which would require the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to report how much they spend on ESA related litigation; H.R. 4317, sponsored by Congressman Neugebauer, which would define “best scientific and commercial data available” as including “all such data submitted by a State, tribal, or county government;” and H.R. 4318, sponsored by Congressman Huizenga, which would cap attorney reimbursements in ESA litigation to \$125 per hour.

Together, the previously introduced bills make modest but important revisions to the Endangered Species Act to address clearly identified, existing issues. Although the consolidated bill does not resolve all of the problems created by the unintended consequences of enactment of the ESA, it is an important step in that direction.

We support your efforts to make information used in listing endangered species more open and accessible. This is vital in determining whether the agencies are acting in the best interests of the public in their listing decisions.

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We also support provisions in the bill aimed at stemming the uncontrolled flow of taxpayer dollars to those who litigate against the agencies using the citizen suit provisions of the ESA. While we would favor elimination of the widely abused citizen suit provision, we view these reforms as a step in the right direction.

We applaud your efforts to improve the ESA to make it more workable and less burdensome for our members and others who must deal daily with its unnecessary negative impacts.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Partin". The signature is written in dark ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Tom Partin  
President