



AMIGOS DE LAS AVES USA

The Parrot Fund

A 501(c)(3) charitable corporation

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Wild parrots: keep them flying!

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and

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4 July 2017

Congressman Louie Gohmert
Vice Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
US House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House office building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congressman Gohmert:

I thank you very much for sponsoring H.R. 2603, "Saving America's Vulnerable and Endangered Species Act." I summarize below some reasons why I agree removing non-native species from under the purview of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a change whose time has come.

1.) The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was and is "to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend." How it has been implemented within the United States certainly is open to discussion and disagreement, yet within our country it has helped a large number of native species. The same cannot be said for non-native species living in foreign nations over which the US has no jurisdiction, cannot make safe harbor agreements, or make any of the other national-local agreements that promote species conservation while reducing the negative impacts of the ESA on personal freedoms and private property rights. It is superfluous regulation with no purpose or beneficial effect.

2.) The present implementation of the ESA makes it nearly impossible to maintain viable populations of non-native species in captivity because of the time consuming, complex, costly and often conflicting regulations that owners must contend with. Yet there is no concomitant benefit to those species in their native countries. Interstate exchanges of individuals for breeding purposes are hindered by the permitting requirements and expenses, and surplus animals (and presumably plants) cannot be sold but must be maintained by the breeder, given away, or destroyed. I personally am trying to breed several endangered parrot species. I know of out-of-state people who would sell me important genetic representatives to add to my breeding programs, but the present version of the ESA requires both of us

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to have captive breeding permits that are difficult, expensive and time consuming to try to obtain. I also have people who are interested in buying any surplus birds I may have, but I must tell them I cannot sell any to them because of the ESA regulations. I am thus a very small and simple example of how the present version of the ESA hinders the development of small businesses that might wish to do transactions across state lines.

3.) Millions of dollars are wasted by the huge bureaucracies needed in the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in responding to listing petitions, litigation, managing the permitting processes, and performing the required periodic 5-year reviews. Time that could be focused on native species and their recovery is wasted on regulating US ownership of non-native species with only negative effects on the conservation of these species.

4.) HR 2603 cleans up duplicate regulations: CITES, a major international conservation treaty with 183 parties, will continue to regulate international movement and protection of endangered species. There is no need for another US law to regulate species not native to the US. While the CITES treaty certainly could be improved to be more effective and less political, the US Endangered Species Act in no way addresses CITES problems. And the Wild Bird Conservation Act is more than adequate to regulate ownership of non-native birds in the United States.

5.) Regulations should not impede personal freedom, economic opportunity, and interstate commerce without benefits that markedly exceed the damages caused. Applying the ESA to non-native species with a broad brush does not deliver such benefits.

6.) Finally, I have had to point out to some people who initially objected to HR 2603 because of the problem of dangerous and invasive species, that HR 2603 does not impact the Government's ability to regulate non-native invasive species under the Federal Injurious Wildlife Law (Lacey Act 18 U.S.C. Sec. 42).

In closing, thank you for submitting this amendment to the House Committee on Natural Resources. I have asked my Congressman Bill Flores to support this much needed modernization of the Endangered Species Act. I hope your efforts come to fruition.

Regards



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and

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