

National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition

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National Coalition Applauds House Resources Committee ESA Hearing *Seeks to Build on Species Success Stories*

The National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition (NESARC) today expressed its strong support for tomorrow's House Resources Committee field hearing in Jackson, Mississippi that will examine new ideas on modernizing and improving the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This first hearing on potential improvements to the ESA this Congress will focus on lessons learned in protecting and restoring wildlife in the Southern United States.

"The members of NESARC are very excited that Congress plans to pursue legislation that will update and improve the ESA," said NESARC Chairman Mac McLennan. "Congress must make these improvements to do a better job of recovering endangered and threatened species."

NESARC is supporting an unprecedented bicameral effort by the House Resources and the Senate Environment and Public Works committees, as they pursue legislative changes to the 31-year old law. House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA) will be joined by Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Representative Chip Pickering (R-MS) at the hearing.

Establishing recovery objectives, increasing the role of State and local governments, improving critical habitat, and providing additional landowner incentives are a few of the issues under consideration. Many of these topics offer the chance to improve the Act's effectiveness, and were virtually unexplored by Congress when the ESA was enacted in 1973.

There are 483 species in the Southern U.S. listed as endangered or threatened, and 81 more are candidates for listing. Nationwide, there are 1,264 listed species with less than one percent of listed species recovered since the ESA's enactment.

"We applaud the leadership of Chairman Pombo and the Resources Committee for raising the profile of this issue," said McLennan. "The hearing will be a great opportunity to hear from the local community about the effects of the ESA, and the need for improvements to the Act."

NESARC is a non-profit organization of member organizations representing millions of individuals across the U.S. dedicated to improving and updating the ESA. Members come from groups acutely affected by ESA implementation, such as farmers, cities and counties, rural irrigators, electric utilities, forest and paper, agricultural interests, mining, and others.

The hearing will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 30th at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, 2148 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS. The hearing will be open to the public and the press.

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