

August 23, 2018

Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



Re: Draft Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The American Highway Users Alliance (The Highway Users) commends your leadership in undertaking the hard work of crafting constructive reforms to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as set forth in the Discussion Draft legislation you released in July.

The Highway Users have for years worked hard to streamline the environmental review process associated with delivering highway projects. This is another area for streamlining. When an ESA issue arises with respect to a highway project, the uncertainty under the current system can cause delay or even discourage projects from being advanced. We can do better in conserving species while allowing the economy to grow, including undertaking highway projects that are needed to support the economy and personal mobility.

As explained on the website of the Environment and Public Works Committee, provisions of the Discussion Draft bill would, among other things:

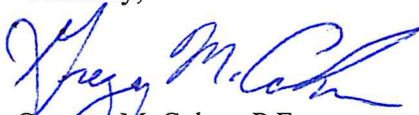
- Require that any listing of a species must also include recovery goals and criteria, developed in consultation with impacted states, for delisting or downlisting of a species,
- Provide regulatory certainty for stakeholders to facilitate participation in conservation and recovery activities,
- Give great weight to evidence and information provided on behalf of state governments; and
- Increase transparency associated with carrying out species conservation.

Such changes to current law will create greater certainty for stakeholders and help states deliver their highway programs while conserving species.

We support advancement of this legislation and hope that the legislation can retain its current approach as it advances to enactment.

We will be delighted to work with you on this legislation as well as other important legislation that will improve our nation's highway program.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Cohen, P.E.
President and CEO