



# Washington Cattlemen's Association

P.O. Box 96 ♦ ELLENSBURG, WA 98926 ♦ 509-925-9871 ♦ FAX 509-925-3004  
WACATTLE@KVALLEY.COM ♦ WWW.WASHINGTONCATTLEMEN.ORG

July 11, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The Washington Cattlemen's Association is made up of over 1,200 members from across the state of Washington, we wish to express our support for the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "the purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend." While a laudable and important goal, data indicates that fewer than 2% of the species listed under the Act since its inception have been successfully recovered. What was originally intended to be a wildlife recovery program has instead become a toolbox of litigation-ready opportunities for agenda-driven outside groups and individuals to exert control over proper policy making. Policies and mandates, often crafted by legal settlement rather than scientific data, have become the norm.

This top-down approach is a key contributor to the ESA's abysmal success rate and its burden on local communities and land managers. As a result, groups across the political and conservation spectrum have called for updates to the ESA aimed at solving these problems. The gold standard for tackling this challenge has been the Western Governors Association's bipartisan resolution – passed after years of collaboration with impacted stakeholders including local governments, environmental interest groups, and industry leaders – calling on Congress to make the ESA work for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by putting more decision-making authority in the hands of the locals who interact with species most frequently.

In Washington State specifically, where we have a separate, state listing process for endangered species we do have some concern about the state control. We would suggest the following: *For a state to be eligible for a Federal-State Partnership, the state's ESA policy must conform to the purpose and polices for the Federal ESA. Specifically, all listings, recovery plans and status reviews must be required to conform to the scientific standard "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available" and for the state's ESA policy to give consideration for the species condition outside the state.*

For generations, livestock producers have been dedicated to improving the health of landscapes where wildlife call home. Over the years, they have grown frustrated by the lack of commonsense ESA implementation and being put on the sidelines while those decisions are made. This legislation will help bring them back to the table to craft recovery plans that are workable and produce favorable results. In Washington, the spotted frog is an example of recovery of a species, whose recovery occurred in part due to livestock producer's practices. The grey wolf is an example of federal delisting and recovery in Washington, but a state listing that is still providing challenges to livestock producers.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to finding workable solutions that bring the ESA into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We urge swift passage of the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

Sarah Ryan  
Executive Vice President  
Washington Cattlemen's Association