



National Association of Conservation Districts

September 23, 2019

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Chairman
Congressional Western Caucus
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gosar:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 locally-elected men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on all private lands and many public lands in the United States.

Voluntary and locally-led conservation must play a critical role in modernizing the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA legislative package that the Congressional Western Caucus has announced this week emphasizes the needs of communities impacted by listings and focuses on scientific consensus.

NACD supports this package requiring the federal government to work with all public and private partners, including conservation districts and tribal governments involved in managing critical habitat for listed species. Furthermore, NACD supports codification of the administration's rules on Section 4, 4(d) and 7 of the ESA, as these rules provide greater clarity and efficiency in implementation, while maintaining critical core protections of the ESA.

NACD appreciates members of the Congressional Western Caucus who are seeking to develop programs that incentivize landowners to encourage species recovery on private lands. We strongly believe that local decision-making, rather than litigation, is the best way to address environmental challenges and achieve positive results for our threatened species.

Thank you for your efforts to bring the ESA into the 21st century and for the public discussion you are creating with this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Tim Palmer
President
National Association of Conservation Districts