

July 3, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Oppose the Harmful President's Budget Proposal for Endangered Species Programs in FY2026**

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of our organizations and our combined millions of members and supporters, we urge you to oppose efforts to defund Endangered Species Act (ESA) programs as you craft the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) appropriations package. Specifically, we request that you reject the egregious proposal outlined in the President's budget that effectively calls for an almost 60% cut to the national ESA program while doubling its workload. The cut would destroy the highly effective, collaborative national effort to save America's imperiled wildlife from extinction.

As you know, the ESA is America's most effective law to protect biodiversity and prevent the extinction of our most vulnerable animals, fish, and plants. At least 99% of species listed under the ESA have been saved from disappearing forever, and hundreds are on the road to recovery despite decades of insufficient funding. The ESA is also broadly popular; according to a study published earlier this month, 84% of Americans across the political spectrum support the ESA, and this level of support has held steady for over 30 years<sup>1</sup>. The ESA represents a promise to conserve wildlife for future generations, and the American public supports the ESA because the law has thus far made good on this promise.

Unfortunately, the President's FY26 budget for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) threatens the continued success of the ESA and the existence of the imperiled species it protects. In the topline budget for the Ecological Services department, FWS's flagship

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<sup>1</sup> <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/conl.13111>

program for implementing the ESA, the administration requests a major administrative change and funding cut that would effectively destroy the program. The budget proposes to move Protected Resources, the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) endangered species program, into FWS' endangered species program without identifying any additional funding for a massively expanded workload. Annual funding for NMFS's Protected Resources program is over \$250 million, while FWS's Ecological Services program receives just under \$300 million. On top of the new responsibilities, the budget proposes a \$37 million cut to FWS's endangered species program. As a consequence of the budget request, Ecological Services would effectively suffer a devastating cut of almost 60%. Its budget would be reduced by half while its workload would double.

Ecological Services has been chronically underfunded for decades, which has led to a backlog in species listings, missing and delayed recovery plans, and insufficient spending on recovery actions for numerous listed species. As of May 2025, approximately 17% of FWS-listed species are missing final recovery plans, and approximately 10% have no recovery guidance whatsoever<sup>2</sup>. If Congress was to follow the President's FY26 budget request for endangered species, the damage to one of America's most important and effective conservation programs would be immediate, devastating, and potentially irreversible.

Iconic American species like the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and humpback whale are among the thousands of species with us today thanks to the ESA, and we are a better nation because of it. It is no surprise that an overwhelming majority of Americans across the political spectrum support the ESA and want to see it protected. Congress must now do its part to protect the ESA and the species that depend on it for their existence. The disastrous ESA cuts proposed in the President's FY26 budget request must be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Animal Welfare Institute  
CalWild  
Carnivore Coexistence Lab  
Cascade Forest Conservancy  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Center for Biological Diversity

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<sup>2</sup> [https://defenders-cci.org/app/recovery\\_plans/](https://defenders-cci.org/app/recovery_plans/)

Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Conservation Law Foundation  
Creation Justice Ministries  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice Action  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin  
Environmental Center of San Diego  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC  
FOUR PAWS USA  
Friends of Blackwater, Inc.  
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Friends of the Earth  
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project  
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance & Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
GreenLatinos  
Guardians of the Wolves  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association  
Heartwood  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
Juniata Valley Audubon Society  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
Law Offices of Laurie E. Dallos, PLLC  
League of Conservation Voters  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Maine Audubon  
National Wolfwatcher Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New Hampshire Audubon  
Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative  
NY4WHALES

NYC Plover Project  
Oceana  
Oregon Wild  
Orleans Audubon Society  
People & Pollinators Action Network  
People and Carnivores  
Poder Latinx  
Project Coyote  
Project Eleven Hundred  
Public Interest Coalition  
Rachel Carson Council  
Reintegrating Wildness  
Resource Renewal Institute  
Save Animals Facing Extinction  
Save Our Allegheny Ridges  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition  
Save the Manatee Club  
Sawtooth Science Institute  
Sea Turtle Conservancy  
Sheep Mountain Alliance  
Sierra Club  
Silvix Resources  
Sky Island Alliance  
Society for the Protection of Insects  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
Species Unite  
Team Wolf  
The 06 Legacy  
The Rachel Carson Council  
The Urban Wildlands Group  
Trap Free Montana  
Trap Free Montana Public Lands  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Walker Lake Working Group, Inc  
Washington Wildlife First  
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Western Nebraska Resources Council

Western Watersheds Project  
Western Wildlife Conservancy  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation, North America  
Wild Watershed Broads  
WildEarth Guardians  
Wildlife for All  
Winter Wildlands Alliance  
Wolf and Wildlife Advocates  
Wolf Conservation Center  
Wolf Hollow  
Wolves of the Rockies  
Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection  
Wyoming Untrapped  
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates  
Yaak Valley Forest Council