

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval Legislation Regarding Congressional Disapproval of a United States Fish and Wildlife Service Rule Relating to Endangered Species Act Protections for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken
September 26, 2023

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 9, a joint resolution that would disapprove the final rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Lesser Prairie-Chicken; Threatened Status with Section 4(d) Rule for the Northern Distinct Population Segment and Endangered Status for the Southern Distinct Population Segment."

The final rule, issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), provides Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections to an American bird species whose historical habitat on the Great Plains has diminished by approximately 90 percent and whose populations have plummeted toward disappearance. Following a rigorous review of the best available scientific and commercial information regarding the past, present, and future threats, as well as ongoing conservation efforts, the USFWS listed the Southern Distinct Population Segment of the lesser prairie-chicken as endangered, and the Northern Distinct Population Segment of the lesser prairie-chicken as threatened. The rule also affirms and protects locally led and crafted voluntary conservation agreements that landowners and land managers have developed in recent years, which provide certainty for industry as well as safeguards for prairie-chicken populations.

S.J. Res. 9 would overturn a science-based rulemaking that follows the requirements of the law, and thereby undermines the ESA. The lesser prairie-chicken serves as an indicator for healthy grasslands and prairies, making the species an important measure of the overall health of America's grasslands. If enacted, S.J. Res. 9 would undermine America's proud wildlife conservation traditions, risk the extinction of a once-abundant American bird, and create uncertainty for landowners and industries who have been working for years to forge the durable, locally led conservation strategies that this rule supports.

Therefore, I am vetoing this resolution.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

The White House,
September 26, 2023.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule relating to Endangered Species Act protections for lesser prairie-chicken, legislation regarding congressional disapproval, veto message.

Subjects: Endangered Species Act; Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.; Wildlife habitat and biodiversity, conservation efforts.

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