

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, “Commemorating Juneteenth,” remarks in the House of Representatives, Congressional Record, daily edition, vol. 162 (June 19, 2018), pp. H5274-H5275.

Representative Brian Babin, “Celebrating Juneteenth 2017,” Extensions of Remarks, Congressional Record, daily edition vol. 162 (June 15, 2017), p. E828.

Senator Harry Reid, “Celebrating Juneteenth,” remarks in the Senate, Congressional Record, daily edition, vol. 162 (June 16, 2016), p. S4258.

Representative Jeb Hensarling, “Hensarling Commemorates Juneteenth,” press release, June 19, 2015.

Representative Julia Brownley, “Recognizing Ventura County’s 24th Annual Juneteenth Celebration,” Extensions of Remarks, Congressional Record, daily edition, vol. 160 (June 19, 2014), p. E1023.

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATIONS AND REMARKS

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to ceremoniously honor a group or call attention to certain issues or events. Some proclamations and remarks commemorating Juneteenth from the Compilation of Presidential Documents include the following:

Statement of the Observance of Juneteenth—President Donald Trump, June 19, 2019

Statement on the Observance of Juneteenth—President Barack Obama, June 19, 2016

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth—President George W. Bush, June 19, 2008

Remarks at a Southwest Voter Registration Education Project Reception in Houston, Texas—President William J. Clinton, June 19, 2000

Other presidential proclamations are available through <https://www.govinfo.gov/>, a portal for free public access to official publications from all three branches of the government, maintained by the Government Publishing Office (GPO).

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Numerous resources provide information on the history and culture of the holiday. Some of these include the following:

Smithsonian, “Juneteenth: Our Other Independence Day.” This blog post includes pictures of Major General George Granger and the house from which he read General Order Number 3.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, for over 150 years, June 19th, commonly known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” has been celebrated as a source of inspiration and encouragement for generations of African Americans in Texas and across the nation. News of the end of slavery did not reach the frontiers of the United States until months after the conclusion of the Civil War, and more than two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. It was not until June 19, 1865 that Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas with news of freedom for the enslaved.

The Roman philosopher Cicero once quoted, “history is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity.” In honor of the spirit, of the trials and tribulations of our ancestors, and the legacy they have left, we must never forget our history. And we can do that by joining together to observe Juneteenth and celebrate the progress we have made thereafter, while also recognizing and reaffirm-

ing our commitment to the work that remains. We can do this by remembering who we are, where we came from, and rejoicing now in the freedom and liberties that we share—and by never taking them for granted.

FAILURE OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, nearly 50 years ago, President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law, which was designed to do two things: Number 1, prevent species from going extinct; and Number 2, promote their recovery back to health and healthy populations.

Since then, hundreds of plants and animals have joined the endangered or threatened species list, spurring conservation and recovery efforts at all levels of government.

While this landmark species protection law is well-intentioned and has accomplished many good things, it has become an endless source of conflict and, unfortunately, many rightly consider it a dismal failure.

The Endangered Species Act hasn’t seen meaningful reform since 1973. And since then, less than 3 percent of species have recovered and been delisted.

The Congressional Western Caucus has long advocated for improvements to modernize the ESA and make it more effective for our species and more transparent for the American people. My colleagues in the caucus have advocated on behalf of the rural communities that we represent who are severely impacted by the ESA listing decisions and who, in many cases, are working in collaboration with private landowners, community groups, Tribes, and local governments to promote successful species recovery and land conservation.

And we have advocated to administration after administration the need to follow the science and fulfill the congressional intent of the law, which is to promote recovery of these species and then remove them from the endangered species list.

That is why I am so proud to host this Special Order tonight, where you will hear from several of my Western Caucus colleagues about successful, locally led recovery efforts taking place across the country; the different im-

pacts that ESA listing decisions have had on local communities and economies; and some of the legislative reforms needed to finally bring the ESA into the 21st century.

Over the past few years, the Trump administration made great progress by finalizing several updates to the ESA to modernize this bedrock law and to improve our ability to protect endangered and threatened species and celebrate our recovery successes.

The Trump administration created a transparent process for designating critical habitat for listed species, and finalized a commonsense definition that a critical habitat must indeed be critical to the species at hand.

Who would have thought?

They streamlined and modernized the process for consultation between government agencies to determine the scope of listing impacts, including requiring the consideration of the economic impact a listing could have on local economies.

Lastly, they finalized a rule that rewards State and landowners for successful recovery actions by loosening mandated regulations on species management as the species begin to recover and are down-listed from endangered to threatened.

Unfortunately, earlier this month, the Biden administration announced plans to rescind or reverse these improvements. This is exactly the wrong direction we should be heading, Madam Speaker.

As we have seen over the past four decades, the ESA has become a weapon used by extreme environmentalists and serial litigators to slow or halt critical economic development and land management projects in rural communities throughout the United States. From preventing the restoration of our forests, to creating overburdensome roadblocks for domestic energy development, the ESA, in its current form, simply does more harm than good.

Oftentimes, these ESA regulations negatively impact the very people we need as conservation partners. Through land use restrictions, reduced property values, and costly permitting requirements, unilateral and far-sweeping listing decisions remove incentive for these local partners to come to the table. In effect, it makes enemies out of the people who are most critical to our efforts instead of treating these species like the assets they are to our local lands. We must empower our local, State, and Tribal partners to collaborate on comprehensive recovery and conservation efforts, and we know this to be true.

More stringent regulations will not lead to more successful species recovery. In rural America, we value the responsible management of plants, animals, and native species, but we have to do so in a way that doesn’t destroy our economies, decimate our lands or leave our communities vulnerable to natural disasters.

We need flexible tools, not one-size-fits-all regulations from the Federal

Government to be successful in our shared goal of recovery of our Nation's endangered and threatened species.

Tonight, we are here to raise the voices of rural communities that are impacted by the ESA and to make our message heard.

Madam Speaker, I yield to my good friend from the great State of Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources for the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, I rise with my colleagues in the Congressional Western Caucus to discuss abuse of the Endangered Species Act, a law passed with good intentions, but weaponized by radicals to fight hunting, fishing, mining, logging, transportation, and our way of life.

In my district in northern Minnesota, the dramatic rise of the gray wolf has posed a threat to our deer herds, our livestock, and our family pets. The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association considers it a top threat to our hunting way of life.

Meanwhile, it wreaks havoc on our cattle ranchers throughout northern Minnesota. One rancher lost 26 cows to wolves in just 1 year.

In 2013, then-President Obama's Fish and Wildlife Service rightfully delisted the gray wolf.

□ 2045

Why? Because the gray wolf had clearly recovered. It had exceeded population targets by as much as 300 percent. And, no, this is not a statistic from hunters or ranchers. This is straight out of a 2013 Fish and Wildlife Service press release.

Dan Ashe, Obama's Fish and Wildlife Service then-Director, when the gray wolf was delisted, stated: "An exhaustive review of the latest scientific information . . . shows that we have accomplished that goal with the gray wolf."

Madam Speaker, what happened next? Activist judges in Washington, D.C., put the gray wolf back on the list just a couple of years later.

And when Obama's Fish and Wildlife Service Director took a well-paying job with an activist group, his tune suddenly changed, and he wanted the gray wolf back on the endangered species list.

Fortunately, the Trump administration did the right thing, listening to the science, and delisted the gray wolf last fall.

However, the same problem with the ESA and activist groups remain, and it is widespread.

Recently, the Fish and Wildlife Service declined to list the moose as an endangered species because their numbers are above targets. This time, the radical activist lawyers said the quiet part out loud. In a Minneapolis Star Tribune article, the Center for Biological Diversity, which has significant influence over House Democrats, stated: "Now it is going to be a lot harder to

ensure that things like mines . . . don't go forward without protections for moose in place."

Could their intentions be any more clearer, Madam Speaker?

The purpose of the ESA is pretty straightforward: to protect endangered species. Tragically, the ESA is not always being used for conservation. It is being weaponized as a way to advance the far left's radical agenda. It is being used by the Green New Deal Democrat Party to stop progress.

We need to update the Endangered Species Act to allow us to hunt, fish, mine, harvest timber, farm, and for other responsible uses. Let's reform the Endangered Species Act and maintain our way of life.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. STAUBER and appreciate him bringing his perspective from the great State of Minnesota.

Like he and his constituents, we in the State of Washington also understand the impact of the gray wolf and what impact it can have on our local ranchers, farmers, and communities. I thank him very much for his work on bringing control back to the State, where it should be.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), who is the Republican ranking member on the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington not only for holding this important forum tonight but also for his tremendous leadership with the Western Caucus, where we look at real solutions for rural America.

Madam Speaker, America is blessed with an incredible abundance of wildlife. Many of these animals have become icons of our country. Look no further than the majestic bald eagle, the national symbol of freedom and American pride.

With such rich biodiversity, we have a responsibility to respect and protect the species that call the United States home. When President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law in 1973, its stated intent was simple: protect wildlife most at risk of extinction.

While the law had just intentions, ambiguous language and lawsuits have allowed special interest groups to hijack the ESA, using it as a weapon against any projects or actions they oppose. This has had a particularly devastating impact on rural economies across the country as red-tape lawsuits block important projects and essential agency actions.

One example of this, as my colleagues from California know, is continual ESA lawsuits over the 3-inch Delta smelt that have diverted trillions of gallons of water away from farmers in the San Joaquin Valley of California to create a man-made drought and double-digit unemployment in recent years.

Despite these diversions, the fish populations of the Delta smelt con-

tinue decreasing, and more farmers are throwing in the towel because of the uncertainty.

We can find another example in the Pacific Northwest. The 1990 listing of the northern spotted owl economically devastated rural communities in Oregon and Washington by virtually decimating the timber industry in the region. The collapse of the timber industry has actually hurt the northern spotted owl by making these forests into dense, overgrown powder kegs. Now, decades later, Americans are paying higher prices for building materials because much of our mill infrastructure was wiped out, never to return.

ESA litigation has also prevented delisting of animals that have fully recovered, like the grizzly bear. The Western States that house grizzly bears undertook a herculean effort to recover them, to the point that the Fish and Wildlife Service found that grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem are fully recovered.

This is not a new issue, as they first moved to delist the Greater Yellowstone population back in 2007. However, due to ESA lawsuits from radical special interest groups, both population segments are still listed.

Unfortunately, examples like this now fill the endangered species list. This is diverting critical resources away from animals that actually need protection.

This should be common sense. If an animal recovers and is thriving in its environment, it should be delisted, plain and simple. Yet, Democrat lawmakers and administration officials are so intent on pleasing the whims of special interest groups that they refuse to follow the science and to look at the facts. We must work together to close these loopholes.

Earlier this month, the Biden administration announced it is rolling back significant ESA reforms. It is another example of how out of touch this administration is with rural Americans and endangered species as well. Under these policies, rural America is now what is in the most danger.

Many of the reforms put in place under President Trump were born out of input from local communities most affected by the policies created in Washington. Yet, this administration seems bent on reinstating burdensome regulations in order to open up the door for environmental groups to again weaponize the ESA.

Republican or Democrat, we can all agree that we want our most vulnerable species not just to survive but to thrive for generations. Using the ESA as a political battering ram will not accomplish this goal.

We must return the ESA to its original intent: protecting wildlife that is most at risk. Anything more than that is a bureaucratic overreach and a giveaway to radical environmental groups.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman again for hosting this forum.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I really thank my friend for his leadership on this very important issue.

As was mentioned earlier, the ESA has a dismal recovery rate of just 3 percent. We have to work hard to strengthen this law in order to provide real results.

We ought to be incentivizing private investment in species recovery, streamline decision-making, and promote the comprehensive efforts of State and local governments as well as Tribes.

I want to just say I greatly appreciate the thoughts of the good gentleman from the Committee on Natural Resources.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD), one of my fellow farmers in Congress and a war veteran. I thank him for being with us tonight.

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the State of Washington for allowing me to have the opportunity to participate in this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the communities and the residents of west central Indiana to share our experience with the Endangered Species Act.

As an animal scientist and a farmer, I am a lifelong conservationist. I value the well-intentioned effort of the ESA to protect and conserve our Nation's most iconic species that define our landscapes and have shaped our heritage. Instead, however, I have repeatedly found myself discouraged with the implementation of this important act.

As I shared here on the House floor a few weeks ago, Lakes Freeman and Shafer, near Monticello, Indiana, have been a popular tourist destination. It has been home to many small businesses, attractions, and a vibrant local economy for generations of Hoosiers. Unfortunately, though, a series of droughts and a tangle of bureaucratic red tape involving the ESA has made a devastating impact on this community.

Following a listing on the endangered species list more than a decade ago of mussels found in the Tippecanoe River, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service subsequently ordered a new higher volume of water to consistently flow out of the Oakdale Dam that forms Lake Freeman, in an effort to preserve these now-protected mussels. This executive action by unelected bureaucrats has crippled our once-thriving community.

Businesses like the Tall Timbers Marina, local resorts, and the Madam Carroll cruise boat, as seen here, report catastrophic losses to revenue and depleted financial reserves.

Homeowners along the lake report ruined seawalls, dried-up wells, and slashed resale values, even during this hottest real estate market of our lifetime.

With zero regard for the economic and environmental catastrophe created, the Fish and Wildlife Service re-

fuses to negotiate and continues to enforce a mandate designed to protect a population of mussels that have likely already died from the bacterial overload created when this 1,500-acre lake was reduced to a puddle, killing practically all the wildlife that used to call Lake Freeman home.

Due to years of misinterpretation of the law, unchecked actions by unelected bureaucrats, and radical environmentalism, this once valuable law, designed to conserve America's natural beauty, has instead proved time and time again to be a death knell to actual ecosystems and the nearby communities.

The Service consistently hides behind its ability to point fingers at other agencies, whose compliance is obligated by the ESA as a means to avoid rational management of the act and the species it protects.

As thought leaders and policy-makers, we have an important responsibility to preserve the natural beauty that God has bestowed on our land. The Endangered Species Act was established with that mission at heart but has gone frightfully astray.

It has been 40 years since the enactment of the ESA. Now more than ever, it is time to modernize this important law, to fix its broken parts to better serve its purpose and to allow for responsible solutions to disasters like Lake Freeman.

I hope my colleagues will join me in this valuable effort.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. BAIRD and appreciate his leadership on this important issue.

From farming to ranching to mining to forestry to recreational opportunities, the far-reaching impacts of the Endangered Species Act go wide. I thank him for bringing up those very important points.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN), my good friend and colleague from the town of Quinter.

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington very much for his leadership with the Western Caucus and for hosting this Special Order tonight.

Madam Speaker, I rise today, with my colleagues from the Western Caucus, to highlight progress made in the lesser prairie chicken population recovery through voluntary conservation efforts in Kansas.

The lesser prairie chicken is a North American species native to the grasslands and southern Great Plains across New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. These birds use the open areas of the plains to perform their courtship dance and build their nests on the ground, away from any roads or structures.

□ 2100

My district, the Big First of Kansas, is home to the most extensive range and largest population of the lesser prairie-chicken.

Since the 1990s, there have been concerns regarding the lesser prairie-chicken population size and habitat, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has considered listing the bird under the Endangered Species Act on multiple occasions.

The Fish and Wildlife Service cited habitat fragmentation as one of the reasons for its population decline, as much of the area is used for cropland, grazing, and oil and gas development. However, we have seen perhaps the most significant population changes tied to the prolonged periods of drought across the chicken's range.

At its lowest, the lesser prairie-chicken population fell to approximately 15,400 birds during the worst phase of the 2013 drought.

As the population declined, stakeholders across the five states began conversations and plans to address this issue and partnered with local landowners and industry. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism teamed up with farmers and ranchers, the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Interstate Working Group, and other midwestern States throughout the bird's range to initiate conservation plans.

In their work to help the lesser prairie-chicken, Kansans have conserved more than 40,000 acres of habitat through the Conservation Reserve Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private investments. Many of the voluntary conservation efforts have been directly funded by farmers and ranchers, the energy sector, and other landowners. As stakeholders make conservation changes, it is vital that the practices are mutually beneficial to both the lesser prairie-chicken and agriculture and energy producers.

These voluntary efforts have yielded excellent results, with the lesser prairie-chicken population up to more than 34,400 birds in 2020. In Kansas, the population has been stable to increasing since 2013, while the entire population has been increasing since 2016. The population growth has occurred thanks to voluntary efforts, but also because of increased rainfall, which has also benefited many of the agricultural producers in the area.

And so it is especially alarming and disappointing to see the Fish and Wildlife Service release a plan to list the lesser prairie-chicken under the Endangered Species Act as threatened in the northern population and endangered in the southern population.

The potential ESA listing flies in the face of years spent and millions invested in voluntary conservation and goes against the clear data that the population has increased under those efforts. As usual, President Biden believes Federal overreach is the answer to a local and State issue, and his administration lacks trust in private landowners to take care of their own land.

I strongly and vehemently oppose the listing of the lesser prairie-chicken, and I will continue to push back on the

Biden administration's egregious overreach.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate very much Mr. MANN's participation in this Special Order but also his leadership on this very important issue. He gives clear examples in his own district of seeing the success in the recovery of, in his case, the lesser prairie-chicken through, I think I heard him say, voluntary conservation efforts.

It just underscores the need for us to be able to recognize all of the efforts that are being taken on these species' behalf, utilize the best available science, and consider all efforts that are being made when assessing these listing decisions.

I thank Mr. MANN, and I appreciate very much his contribution.

Now, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), a prospective member of the Western Caucus, one that we would be delighted to have her membership, but certainly appreciate very much her participation this evening to help us illustrate this very important issue to the American public. We are anxious to have her here this evening.

Ms. TENNEY. Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues today urging common-sense policies to carry out the goals of the Endangered Species Act while allowing our communities to flourish.

As stewards of our planet, we each have a responsibility to care for the environment and protect our wildlife while also caring for and addressing the needs of our human environment, which often gets left out in this conversation.

However, today it seems more difficult than ever to have balanced discussions. Deeply entrenched special interests are increasingly using our small communities as pawns for their larger political ambitions. Unfortunately, the bureaucrats in both the Federal and State Government, especially in New York, have become more powerful than the people, and that is unacceptable.

I want to bring to your attention what is happening in my community today. I represent New York's 22nd District, which stretches all the way from Lake Ontario, yes, a Great Lake, to the Pennsylvania border in the heart of beautiful, pastoral, upstate New York.

On April 16, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ordered an immediate halting of a routine annual dredging project to clear ingress and egress into the lovely inlet of Sandy Pond, which is on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, due to the sighting of a piping plover, a small shoreline bird that weighs less than 2 ounces. Even though there are over 10,000 of these birds today throughout the Great Plains and eastern seaboard, they remain listed as an endangered species in the Great Lakes region.

The annual dredging project maintains safe ingress and egress into

Sandy Pond. The seasonal dredging was one week from completion before the forced government closure. There are several hundred homes and campsites along this beautiful spot on Lake Ontario known as Sandy Pond, where people from around the Northeast have enjoyed this incredibly beautiful and unique place for over a century.

The closure has been devastating to local businesses, residents, and visitors, who have already been suffering from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic last summer. Property values alone in this region are in excess of \$150 million, not including all the business revenues and sales tax lost from people coming to this region from really all around the Northeast and Canada.

Despite this harsh Federal action, the two—there are now two—piping plovers' nests are not even close to the dredging site. I know because I went to the site, and I walked off the distance from the dredging site to the beginning of the designated habitat. The distance was clearly over 3,000 feet, just to get to the beginning of the site, where the birds are much farther down.

I want to emphasize that the community cares deeply about the natural environment. They seek to preserve this natural environment and its natural splendor for generations to come, and they deeply care about the continued growth and continued population of this piping plover.

The community has proposed a simple dredging, an economy-mode dredging, which would be less intrusive, to dispose of the sand in an alternative location that would be far away. This is a very modest and safe proposal. It is respectful and preserves the nesting site to the bird, and it is a perfectly reasonable accommodation.

Unfortunately, the Federal and State bureaucrats have dug in and refuse to compromise, despite the fact that dredging can begin again safely and responsibly without threatening the life or the habitat of the birds.

The Federal and State agencies have been unable to support their position yet with data or facts. We have had numerous conversations with them, public meetings, and press conferences, and they refuse to offer any opportunity for the residents to have some relief.

All the while, the community at Sandy Pond continues to suffer, and the harm could be irreparable harm as the situation grows more dire each day, as the safe passage into Sandy Pond to and from Lake Ontario becomes impossible.

The piping plover, interestingly, has not been seen in this part of Sandy Pond. Really it is sort of a rare resident. And it has been determined that actually piping plovers like dredged sand. It unearths minerals and nutrients for them, and they tend to be flocking now to these nesting sites. Sadly, a few years ago one of the pairs that did show up was killed by a fox, so

we were unable to save that particular pair.

There are far too many communities that have suffered from the whims of bureaucrats in Washington and Albany who just don't seem to care and seem to be hiding behind many of these rules and regulations when there are reasonable alternatives that will preserve the natural environment as well as the human environment.

I am concerned that to make matters worse the Biden administration is barreling down a path of appeasement to the left lobbyists and special interests.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has already announced they are repealing recent reforms to the Endangered Species Act put in place under the last administration—and thank you for acknowledging the changes that were made. These changes will enact greater economic costs while doing very little to offer any additional conservation protections for the environment.

Our communities need reasonable compromises to ensure the prosperity and enjoyment of our natural environment for all. This includes the economy as well as the wildlife and the natural environment. The Federal Government must be committed to this outcome as well as the State government.

That is why I rise today, in support of targeted reforms to the Endangered Species Act that provide for common-sense solutions that will protect the natural environment for all species.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I thank Ms. TENNEY for illustrating what is necessary common sense and finding a balance between protecting species as well as protecting a region's economic stability. I thank her very much for her leadership in that overall picture. We look forward to continuing to work with her.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry of the Committee on Natural Resources.

□ 2110

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the State of Washington, a good friend and chairman of our Western Caucus. I appreciate the time and the effort to have this time of education here tonight on the House floor, and for those who would watch and want to actually learn what goes on.

So where do we start on the Endangered Species Act?

Passed in 1973, signed by Republican President Richard Nixon.

Now, if you were to listen to the rhetoric any time Republicans want to talk about reforming the Endangered Species Act or doing things that make sense, I think, out in the woods or with water storage, with mining the critical minerals we are going to need for a lot of these idealistic views, we are going to have more and more use of electricity, you would think that we were

going to be the plunderers of the land. Completely not the case.

The things that are going on right now in the time of drought we have in the West, in my home State of California, and the ongoing problems we have with nonmanaged timber lands, U.S. forest lands, and the resulting effect that has on private lands with the bad neighbors of U.S. lands are typically to them.

If we are in a time of drought, we need to up our game more so on forestry, forest management, thinning, and using these materials for the good of people.

We had a toilet paper shortage months ago, as ridiculous as that sounds in a first-world country like the United States, yet we are burning millions of acres every year. You could trace a lot of this back to the misuse, the abuse of the Endangered Species Act to stop and block the type of work we need to be doing.

We have had hundreds of thousands of acres of fire like over there on the Western Coast, north coast of California. They try to put in a project after a 400,000-acre burn to do a minimal amount, 7,000 acres of clean up, of restoration, of removing some of the dead trees and brush and other things that were left behind along roadways and somewhere around communities, et cetera. Environmental lawsuits come in and stop them from doing 7,000 acres, less than 2 percent out of the fire.

So what is the solution to this? Just watch these ghost trees stay there, watch the brush grow up around all this and become the next tinderbox for the next fire in 5 or 7 years?

That seems to be the solution by those on the far left that use the Endangered Species Act as a weapon to stop progress for people, as well as nature, as well as the environment.

California is in the throes of drought right now big time. Our reservoirs are way down from just 2 years ago when they were all practically full, and 2 years before that topped off, too. You may recall Lake Oroville, the Oroville Dam had the spillway break apart in the early part of 2017, because the lake was actually flowing over the top of the emergency spillway. The dam is in fine shape. The spillway has been rebuilt. And we have stored a lot of water between then and now.

So what has gone on?

So much water has been released out to the Pacific Ocean and not used for people use, for agricultural use or even smart environmental use.

The usage of the Endangered Species Act as a weapon has devastated so much of agriculture in California, which maybe people don't realize that 90 percent of certain types of crops, the vegetable crops that the United States people use come from California. Most of the almonds that you would use come from California.

Where is this going to come from if California is out of business because of

the misuse and abuse of the Endangered Species Act, because someone might decide the coho salmon up in the Klamath Basin is more valuable than the sucker fish in the Klamath Lake or the water foul that gets forgotten about in the basin right around there?

Last year, we had a devastating kill on ducks and other wildlife in that Klamath Basin area because they couldn't get water through the agricultural system to where the refuges are for the ducks.

So what species is it we are going to pick?

The water in the Klamath project actually is assigned agriculture use. The Klamath project added additional water storage space to the existing Klamath Lake. Oregon courts have already ruled a couple times that additional water belongs to agriculture. It is not something for the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Interior to use in order to make their equations work out on the failed application to salmon in order to, in their idea, flush a virus out of the Klamath River.

There is other evidence out there saying this is actually the opposite of what you should do. That the virus—the C. shasta virus is actually propagated by these additional flows. It is done year after year after year, and the virus keeps returning. Maybe you need to let that stuff dry out.

Also, the sucker fish that they are trying to protect in the lake, the bottom feeding fish, too much water in the lake studies show by the NAS—National Academy of Sciences—that too much water in that lake makes them more vulnerable to predators and doesn't help the sucker fish, which is good at living in a shallow amount of water. So we are going in opposite directions.

Agriculture is devastated in the Klamath Basin. You are probably not going to see the potatoes that In-N-Out Burger uses, horseradish, mint, other products, as well as a lot of hay crops. They are not going to happen this year, except for whatever water they can get from wells up there; not going happen.

So when you see these things not on your store shelf anymore, you will know that there is something going on, or when you see them highly overpriced because we have to get them from some foreign country. You are going to see the root causes because the California water supply has been frittered away for other things besides useful purposes.

And this isn't in defiance of the ESA or helping species, but the right science isn't being used. When you have one-term paper written being used as gospel on the Klamath River as setting policy versus a lot of other evidence—they want to remove the hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River.

Now, when we are talking about drought in California, when we already have lakes and reservoirs that are low, we have—Lake Oroville is going to be

at dead pool probably about mid-August.

Now, what is the temperature in mid-August?

Not quite near what my colleague in Arizona was speaking about, but it is hot. So when we have this water supply run out, unable to produce the hydroelectric power that we normally could because we could store it, then we are going to have more power shortages, not just because of power shutoffs. Because when the wind blows in California, now we have to shut off the power because trees and things might blow branches into the power lines and cause another devastating fire, like what is known as the Camp Fire that devastated the town of Paradise, also in my district.

Where is the common sense with this? Where is the common sense of applying if we have drought conditions or, as the left likes to talk about every other speech in this Chamber, climate change, the religion of climate change?

Okay. If the blanket-blank climate is changing, why aren't we storing more water since we, as people, are smart enough to know we will need a water supply?

Why aren't we doing more to cause electricity be generated at that water storage site?

Why aren't we doing more to trim and manage our forests that are overcrowded?

Way too many trees per acre when they have been managed that way for 100 years.

Instead, we go on and on, and somebody comes up with a lawsuit to prevent us from managing forests that way, prevent us from storing additional water.

Not to mention when we talk about all cars have to become electric by 2035. I know a lot of people who aren't interested in buying electric cars.

What happened to the choice people have of vehicles, the size and the style they seek to have?

Yet we are hell-bent on electrifying everything. In the bay area, they want to ban gas stoves and gas appliances in people's homes because of some idealistic view of the environment and somehow tying that back to the misuse of the Endangered Species Act.

All this ties together. The Endangered Species Act has been a great tool to shut down the things we need to do, whether it is the expansion of a highway, water storage. Shasta Dam right now in my district could be raised 18 feet and add right away 640,000 acre-feet of water on those full years. 640,000 acre-feet would be enough for 1.2 million homes or 200,000 acres of crops that people watching this right now like to have for their fresh fruits, for their salads, for their vegetables, whatever it would be. And this is all going to be gone.

Do you like imported oil? Did you love the oil shortages back in the seventies? Do you like this \$4 or \$5 or \$6 gas and diesel we are having right now?

Then you are going to love imported food.

And the Endangered Species Act has been used as a weapon to stop people from farming, from timbering, from mining, basic things that we need in order to have our electronics, to have copper for our wiring, any of those things.

□ 2120

It has been such a weapon since 1973, when it was passed with good intentions. And I still think we need to have it. It saved the bald eagle. It saved a lot of things. But also, its record overall, looking at savings of endangered species, is a pretty low number. Why? Because of ridiculous regulations and ridiculous biological opinions that don't even connect the dots of how this is going to help the salmon in the Klamath River or farther up in Washington where they want to rip some of those dams out, too, and take away that hydroelectric power.

Where are we going to get the stored water? Where are we going to get the hydroelectric power? You want to completely rely on what is a narrow part of the grid, solar power or wind power? You can't even rely on those, not for a major part of the grid. We need to have 24-7 electricity you can count on with either biomass, wood products stacked on the deck, the waste wood that should come from the forestry that we should be doing but aren't doing nearly fast enough, or natural gas plants. We have so much gas in this country now because of hydraulic fracturing, but that is vilified, too.

Pipelines bringing energy where it is needed is vilified, too, because they are using an endangered species somewhere as a tool to stop these developments.

Americans, enjoy these high prices you are getting right now. Enjoy these shortages of electricity, of fuel, the higher cost of food, the shortage of certain food items, because the usage of the Endangered Species Act—and the usage of other environmental laws that have been abused—that has been completely taken out of context from the original intent like Congress passed back in 1973 or layered upon in recent years.

We have to reform this process. It is not because Republicans want to plunder the planet. That is so tiresome. Any time we talk about forest management, oh, you are going to clear cut everything—I'm from northern California—from here to Oregon, or somewhere else.

That is not it at all. Talk to any smart timber operation, and they have 80- to 100-year plans for the private lands that they manage. If you could fly over and look at how these timberlands are managed, you can tell there is generally a checkerboard of private land versus Federal land. You can see the different squares as they are managed either before a fire, ongoing, or after a fire.

Just fly over one 3 years after a fire and see who has actually been out

there cleaning up their lands and trying to restore things versus unmanaged Federal land, which is still the big mess it was right after the fire. You will see the way the government is doing it, the way the left is foisting these ridiculous rules and laws upon us and not allowing us to do reasonable reform to bring just a little bit of balance back into what was passed 50 years ago into what we have to deal with.

At this time, when we are watching things go way off-kilter here under this administration, I just remind those watching to look at the root cause. It all ties together, the Endangered Species Act, other environmental laws, other lawsuits, when you can't even turn around to do a simple thing without somebody coming after you, suing you over it.

Look around your own home. Try to build a deck on your own home and someone is going to try to environmentally slow you down on that these days. Farmers are getting fined for building a pond on their land in the Western States in order to retain a little more water for their cattle.

When you see the high prices of these things all happening, look at the root cause. Enjoy these high prices of fuel and electricity and the shortage there, and know it is not because of our policies here but because of the policies of misuse and abuse of endangered species laws, of environmental laws, and all the lawsuits that go along with them.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, the gentleman has certainly been a true leader on this issue and a passionate, experienced, and knowledgeable voice. We appreciate his work on the Western Caucus.

We cannot continue to use a one-size-fits-all approach. That often leads to mismanagement. The gentleman's examples and illustrations bear that out to be true, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on this issue.

As I mentioned earlier, the Biden administration has proposed a massive rollback of recent improvements to the ESA, or the Endangered Species Act. Many members from the caucus and across the country and I are very concerned that these rollbacks will hamper our ability to work with local leaders on species recovery.

I think it is also worth mentioning that the administration's actions are in direct contrast to their report on the proposed 30 by 30 initiative, which aims to conserve 30 percent of our Nation's lands and waters by the year 2030. Their report claims that as part of this initiative, they will recognize and reward voluntary conservation efforts of private landowners and recognize the contributions of farmers and ranchers, forest owners, and others in rural America. Instead, they are looking to impose even more Federal restrictions on these conservation partners, and that is the opposite to the approach that we should be taking.

Madam Speaker, quite frankly, it ignites even greater concerns about the

administration's so-called conservation initiative.

Madam Speaker, just to remind you, I started off the evening saying that it was nearly 50 years ago that President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law. If you will recall, it was designed to do two things: prevent species from going extinct and promote their recovery back to health and healthy populations.

I think we have heard tonight that we can accomplish that, and we need to accomplish that. A strong ESA and strong recovered species can happen, but they don't have to happen at the expense of communities and our economy. Those two things are not mutually exclusive.

I think the arguments, the cases, and the illustrations that you have heard tonight perfectly allow us to understand that.

Madam Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues from the Western Caucus for participating tonight. This is a very important issue, something that I think all of us in Congress can find a lot of common ground on. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on successful reform of the Endangered Species Act.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING MICHELLE ALLMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, in honor of Caribbean Heritage Month, I recognize Michelle Allman.

Michelle, otherwise known as Coach Mea Allman, born in Jamaica, comes from a diverse, mixed cultural heritage: her father, Costa Rican, and her mother, Jamaican, Arawak Indian, Scot. She was raised in Canada and now resides in Florida.

She noticed early in her career the bullying of young people with cultural accents in schools and the general lack of awareness about their Caribbean heritage. Coach Mea felt a need to be part of educating her Caribbean-American community by publishing an online publication called *Karibbean Under One Magazine* in 2008, along with her son, Michael Morgan, as cofounder and CFO, to show the richness of diverse cultures; to be a community liaison for other Caribbean organizations and businesses to provide resources, outreach, disaster relief; and to help others to unite and grow our cultural awareness in the larger community.

As a cultural advocate, she is passionate about building a welcoming community with her Women of Culture brand that comes together as community leaders to educate, empower, and celebrate while keeping their own sense of cultural identity.

As a certified professional life, health, and nutrition coach, she encourages others to make, meet, and exceed goals in both their personal and