

make sure that they are treated equally and in an extraordinary manner.

We can simply never do enough for our veterans. We love our soldiers, but we turn our backs far too often on our veterans. It is with the best of intentions that we call on the Veterans Administration to make sure that Black veterans are not excluded from the important care and restoration they need afforded to them in the PACT Act.

We call on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Denis McDonough, to personally commit his attention and time to making sure that none of the past injustices and disparities reveal themselves in the practical application of this law.

I must say to all my colleagues, my Democratic colleagues, and my fellow members of the Congressional Black Caucus who were members of the 117th Congress, on behalf of all of the veterans, and particularly of all the Black veterans, who make their home in the First Congressional District of the State of Illinois, I extend to you my most sincere gratitude for your hard work in making this law a reality.

Millions of people will be positively affected by what you have accomplished. Millions of people find relief and some measure of restoration because of what you have done in the 117th Congress. Millions of veterans will be able to sleep a little sounder at night from the care that they receive because of what you did in the passing of this law. Future veterans will owe much of the improvements we will make in taking care of them to all of you.

Well done, good and faithful servants. You have honored this country by caring about the people of this country and nothing is greater than that.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 14 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise, again, today to be the voice of Black men and women who have selflessly dedicated their lives to the country, but now find themselves on the street.

These veterans represent the heart and soul of our Nation, serving a country that did not always serve them, and yet we are failing to help them again. Homelessness is felt acutely by Black veterans. Black individuals made up around 12 percent of Active-Duty military personnel in 2018 but were 33 percent of the homeless veteran population.

Throughout the pandemic, the VA reduced veteran homelessness by 11 percent and permanently housed over 40,000 veterans. This decrease can be directly attributed to the flexibilities that were found because of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, but now with the PHE having ended, many veterans may soon find themselves out on the street.

Unfortunately, Republicans decided to vote against my proposal, H.R. 645, the Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act, which would have helped put roofs over veterans' heads. It is shameful.

Our brave veterans willingly stepped into the line of fire and accepted the looming shadow of danger all to safeguard our cherished liberties. To honor that sacrifice, it is our duty as a Nation and as Members of Congress to ensure they return home to a Nation that provides opportunities for them and their families.

We must equip our VA with the necessary tools to directly engage with and provide care for Black veterans grappling with housing insecurity. This isn't a partisan issue.

For each day that we, as Congress, fail to authorize and address veterans' homelessness, we condemn another veteran to a night of needless suffering on the street. The time to act is now. For every night delayed is a night too long for those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from across the aisle to work with House Democrats so we may serve those who served us. A Nation's greatness is not measured by its military might or its economic power but by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens, especially those who have served our country so bravely.

My Democratic colleagues and I will not leave our veterans behind on this very soil they volunteered to protect and defend. As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and ranking member of the Subcommittee for Modernization, I ask all of us to think about this Memorial Day not in the same reference, but to pledge ourselves to do more for our veterans and to ensure that they are not living in homelessness or housing insecurities and that they are having access to their benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, again, today to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have dedicated their lives to serving our great Nation. As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I pledge to fight for our veterans from all walks of life. Their stories of courage, resilience, and commitment demonstrate a legacy of service and sacrifice.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, post-9/11 veterans are becoming more and more diverse than previous generations. Today, women represent a remarkable 17 percent, while African Americans make up 15.3 percent of our current veteran population. We recognize the trailblazers who have not only served our Nation, but also enriched the diversity of our Armed Forces.

I am fortunate to count among my constituents many such heroes. One of Florida's 20th Congressional District heroes is Ms. Shenetria Moore, a resident of West Palm Beach. A United States Army veteran, Ms. Moore is a beacon of self-discipline and leads a life guided by her deeply-held principles.

Ms. Moore graduated with a diploma from the prestigious Academy of Health Science at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and was later honored with an Army accommodation award by her commanding officer.

Once retired from Active Duty, she continued to serve by launching a non-profit, Sha's Community Initiative, Inc., which provides mentorship and scholarships for young Black men. Ms. Moore's service-oriented philosophy has its roots in her family military experience.

Today, as a proud veteran and a dedicated community advocate, she continues to serve with the same excellence she displayed while she was in uniform. I thank Ms. Moore for her service to this great Nation and to Florida's 20th Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize my father-in-law, Corlie McCormick, Sr., who is no longer with us, who served as a Vietnam vet.

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

2023 SPECIES WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, 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. Mr. Speaker, you probably didn't know this, but 50 years ago, President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law, which was designed to do two very important things: Prevent species from going extinct and promoting their recovery.

Mr. Speaker, 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 well-intentioned, this law, unfortunately, has been abused and twisted so much that it doesn't even begin to achieve its goals. In short, it is a failure.

Although there have been some successes in the past 50 years, only 72 of the 1,389 listed species have been recovered and removed from the list. That is a 5 percent success rate. Only in the Federal Government would anyone consider 5 percent a passing grade.

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.

We have advocated on behalf of the rural communities that we represent

who are severely impacted by ESA listing decisions and who, in many cases, are working in collaboration with private landowners, community groups, tribes, local governments to promote successful species recovery and land conservation. We have advocated to administration after administration to follow the science and fulfill the congressional intent of the law which is to promote recovery of these species and remove them from the endangered species list.

That is why I am really proud, Mr. Speaker, to host this Special Order tonight where you will hear from my Western Caucus colleagues about successful, locally-led recovery efforts that are taking place across this country, about the need for conservation, not just preservation, of our species, the different impacts that ESA listing decisions have on local communities and economies, and some of the legislative reforms that are needed to finally bring the ESA into the 21st century.

As we have seen over the past 50 years, ESA has become a weapon used by extreme environmentalists and by 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 excessively burdensome roadblocks to domestic energy development, the ESA used in this way actually can do more harm than good.

These combative environmental groups use the ESA to drive a political wedge to achieve their true ambition, the end of ranching, the end of resource development, and the end of timber harvest on public lands. It is not just a western or a public lands issue.

There are approximately 1.3 billion acres of private land in the United States and 926 of the currently listed species are on those private lands, which means cooperation with these communities and these landowners is essential. It is crucial for recovery.

Unfortunately, ESA regulations often negatively affect the very people we need as conservation partners through land use restrictions, through reduced property values, and costly permitting requirements. In effect, the law literally makes enemies out of the people most critical to the species recovery.

We must empower our local, our State, and our Tribal partners to collaborate on comprehensive recovery and conservation efforts, and we understand more stringent regulations will not lead to more successful species recovery.

In rural America, we value the responsible management of species, but we have to do so in a way that does not destroy our economies, that does not decimate our lands, or leave our communities vulnerable to natural disasters.

We need flexible tools, not tools that are one-size-fits-all regulations that

come out of the Federal Government, to be successful in our shared goal of recovery of our Nation's endangered species and threatened species.

Tonight, as we always do, we are here to raise the voices of rural communities across this country, and tonight we are focused on those voices that are telling us how they have been impacted by the ESA and make their message heard.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD).

□ 2030

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the great State of Washington for giving me this opportunity and giving the people back home this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise 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-intended effort of the ESA to protect and conserve our Nation's most iconic species that really define our landscapes and have shaped our heritage.

Unfortunately, I believe the ESA has failed to achieve the underlying mission, and many of my constituents have been forced to experience the consequences firsthand.

Lakes Freeman and Shafer near Monticello, Indiana, have been a proper and appropriate tourist destination—home to many small businesses and attractions, and a vibrant local economy. A series of droughts and a tangle of bureaucratic red tape involving ESA devastated our once-thriving community.

Following a listing more than a decade ago of mussels on the endangered species list found in the Tippecanoe River, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service subsequently ordered a new higher volume of water to 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 became a death knell to the community and surrounding area. Businesses like the Tall Timbers Marina or The Madam Carroll cruise boat reported catastrophic losses of revenue. Homeowners along the lake reported ruined seawalls, dried up wells, and poor resale values.

The ESA not only failed to save the endangered population of mussels that sparked this misguided intervention—the mussels likely died from bacterial overload created by reducing a 1500-acre lake to a puddle—but also claimed the lives of other wildlife in the area that died from the inhospitable conditions created by this rulemaking.

What happened in my district was an unmitigated disaster with antiquated Federal policies providing little resources for the community nearly leveled by its outstanding and outdated regulations.

After 50 years, it is time to modernize the law—to fix the broken parts, to make it better serve its intended purpose, and to allow for responsible solutions to disasters like Lake Freeman.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for relating some of the impacts that he sees in his State. You don't have to be in the Western United States to be negatively impacted by some of the things that are in the ESA that need updating. I thank him for relating that.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I am glad he is pointing that out.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY), one of the vice chairs of the Western Caucus, a gentleman that represents another Midwestern State. I thank him for being here tonight.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker I thank the chairman for hosting this discussion on the ESA tonight, it could not be more timely to deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago the Endangered Species Act was created to protect endangered species by taking actions to put them on the road to recovery. Unfortunately, the Endangered Species Act has become a statutory "Hotel California" where radical environmental groups and judges check animals into the endangered species list, but they may never leave.

In fact, over the last 50 years, out of the 1,389 listed species, only 72 have been recovered and removed from the list, as the chairman so eloquently stated in his opening remarks—a 5 percent recovery rate.

Let me be clear, you endanger the Endangered Species Act when you do not remove species that have recovered. As everyone in Wisconsin knows, this is something we have seen far too often as it relates to the gray wolf.

When Federal protections were established for wolves in the Great Lakes region, population levels were in the hundreds. Now there are well over 4,000 in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Most recently, a California activist judge unilaterally put the gray wolf back on the Endangered Species Act list despite its recovery. The judge's decision went against the 26 scientists—beside me here—that have urged for the gray wolf to be removed from the ESA since 2015.

Here they are. There are 26 eminent wildlife biologists that nearly a decade ago said to a judge here in Washington D.C., you are making a mistake re-listing the wolf. Let's allow management by the States where they can be most effectively managed.

The data is clear, we have waited long enough. Congress must pass my bill that I introduced alongside Congresswoman LAUREN BOEBERT. The Trust the Science Act would delist gray wolves in the lower 48 United States and would preclude any future re-listing mischief by activist judges.

When a species is removed from the ESA list, it is something we should celebrate. It is a success story. When a

species has recovered, it enables us to use our limited time and resources to concentrate our efforts to protect and recover other species that truly are under threat or at risk of extinction.

Over the last 50 years, the Endangered Species Act has failed to be a celebration of recovery, and instead, a political weapon. It is past time we change that and turned the Endangered Species Act into something all Americans can celebrate—endangered species success stories.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. TIFFANY. You are absolutely right. In the ESA there have been some success stories and we need to learn to celebrate them. More important, the resources that are being used in successfully recovering those species could then be turned to other resources that desperately need the help.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), one of the young Members of the House of Representatives and a friend of mine.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the Endangered Species Act was a well-intentioned effort to protect the species we are at risk of losing. Unfortunately, the ESA has been hijacked by extreme environmentalists who have weaponized the law, especially in California.

Central Valley families and farmers have seen the negative impacts of heavy-handed and misguided regulations that put fish ahead of our families and our farms.

During dry years, the very limited amount of water available is consistently flushed out to the ocean to protect the delta smelt and other endangered species.

While this precious resource was going out to the Pacific, thousands of acres of farmland were fallowed. This has devastating consequences for the people I represent and the livelihoods that depend on agriculture.

This is something that is important for us to address and talk a little bit about, because when the water goes out to the ocean, obviously we are not taking any of that surface water, and it has an impact on our below-ground water and our aquifers.

These past few years, we have had a huge number of wells fail. In agriculture, you drive around the countryside, and I know a lot of people at home probably see this, where you will see wells pulled out of the ground, the pipes stacked, and they clean them. Two days ago, I was driving around the valley, and there was a situation where there was a pile of sand around this well, and it was obvious the well had failed.

What is really devastating is I have communities all across the valley, and in just working with one nonprofit, there were at least 2,000, either homes or communities, where they had actual tanks put in because the wells had failed and there was going to be no clean water for these people at home,

so they put in tanks and pumps, and they were trucking water to these people so they could have water in their faucets.

This was happening all across the valley. When we talk about the devastating impact it has on our communities, this was something that was at their faucets. It was really frustrating these past few years when you talk to folks and we have to say, well, we can build projects, but we can't build water infrastructure projects. We have had projects that they have been working on for the last 30 years, a simple expansion of an existing well or existing reservoir. We have got a reservoir, like Sites Reservoir, they have been talking about for six decades and have never been able to break ground on that.

When out talking to folks around the district, farmworkers specifically in some of these communities that struggle most with these wells, the conversation they brought up was they can expedite the permitting process for a project like the high-speed rail and you see the project being built, but they can't do anything for water infrastructure.

It is frustrating because a lot of these folks rely on agriculture to make ends meet. Then they go out and see fields being fallowed, they see the land pulled out of production, and it is less work for them, less ability for them to provide for their families. This is something that should be an easy one, but it is regulations like the ESA that put us at such a disadvantage.

Back to my script.

To add insult to injury, many of the actions taken to protect these fish have not been effective. The population of many of our listed species, including the delta smelt, are now worse off than they were before.

Then you look at the situation we find ourselves in today. Whole communities are on the verge of being under water because environmental regulations have prevented these same reservoirs, that we desperately need, from being built that would actually help us prevent some of the flooding that we are dealing with.

Now, we have more than enough water to provide our farms, communities, and homes with water for years to come and nowhere to store it.

Indefinite listing of species allows activists to abuse the ESA, preventing the construction of critical water storage projects and resulting in millions of acre-feet of water being flushed out to the Pacific Ocean.

The needs of the Central Valley are consistently put last, thanks to the abuse of environmental regulations like the ESA. We must work together to reform the Endangered Species Act to strike a more reasonable balance between protecting our environment and common sense.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I thank the junior member of the Appropriations Committee and chairman of the Western Caucus, Mr. NEWHOUSE.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, he had to go there. I thank Mr. VALADAO for his words. Sometimes going off script is dangerous at times, but I think he made a really good point about right now in California, there is an abundance of water, so much so that some communities are flooding.

If we could just store that water, then we would not have to idle all of that farmland that I hear is being set aside because there is not enough water to irrigate. Communities wouldn't be struggling. We need the food that California produces as a country. That is important to us. These are the things that are not just affecting people in California but the whole country.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman from Washington probably knows this, but it is important to highlight the fact that California is the number one agriculture State in the country.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I think Mr. VALADAO's time has expired, but he makes some really good points, and I appreciate that. Since he is a young man, I am always amazed at how much he has picked up in a short amount of time here.

Next, I turn to someone that has really impressed with her knowledge of natural resource issues, not just in her home State but throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN).

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week the Endangered Species Act turns 50. It is an act that was initially created to ensure the health of fish, wildlife, and vegetation and to protect species that are either threatened or endangered as defined by the act.

The fact is that the Endangered Species Act would and could work if it were implemented as intended—to recover actually threatened or endangered species. It has instead become a business in and of itself, with an entire economy built around endless studies, monitoring, fieldwork, and lawsuits. Bureaucrats spend their entire careers trying to prevent species from being delisted—as to keep them on the list ensures job security.

The Endangered Species Act has had profound impacts on my State of Wyoming by limiting economic development and restricting the implementation of reasonable and effective land, water, and resource management and use.

It doesn't have to be that way. Under the ESA, once the recovery goals for a species have been met, the species should be delisted. That, however, is not what happens. Instead, and regardless of the actual status of the species, it can take decades to delist a recovered species.

The Canadian gray wolves are a classic example. They were introduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 with a recovery goal for the greater Yellowstone area being 100 wolves. We met that goal in 2002.

□ 2045

It then took multiple lawsuits and 15 years to have them actually delisted, which finally happened in 2017, as ordered by the circuit court of appeals. The environmental groups fought against delisting, despite the fact that Wyoming's wolf management plan was approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service and has since proven successful in maintaining the wolf population well in excess of recovery goals.

The Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear is another example. The State of Wyoming has spent over \$59 million on recovery and has an excellent management plan in place to ensure a recovered population will continue to be protected. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that the grizzly population has exceeded recovery goals for the past 20 years.

Yet, again, environmental groups have been able to keep the grizzly bear listed through petitioning activist judges to intervene. The proliferation of bears in Wyoming is so great that they now pose a serious and deadly threat to people, livestock, and other wildlife in my State.

I am thankful to my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee for their support on H.R. 1245, my legislation to delist the Greater Yellowstone population of grizzly bears, and I look forward to passing it out of the House soon.

By continuing to spend limited resources on recovered populations of species, we are deflecting resources from where they should be focused. We are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

In short, as implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and as enforced by activist courts, success is not in recovering a legitimately threatened or endangered species but in ensuring that a recovered species, no matter how robust in number, range, and health, is never delisted.

A related problem is the fact that critical habitat designations are not designed to protect a particular species but to encompass as much area as possible so that the Federal Government and environmental groups can control ever-expanding swaths of land and water. The incentives under the ESA are the exact opposite of what they would actually be if species recovery rather than control were the actual goal.

The ESA has largely become a mechanism by which environmental groups have weaponized the Federal Government and courts to impose restrictions on the use of private property and limit our ability to use our energy and water resources while also receiving massive Federal subsidies through sue and settle actions.

This 50th anniversary of the ESA should be a time to reevaluate and refocus efforts on what the act was originally intended to do. We cannot continue to allow activist courts or agency bureaucrats to block sound species management or infringe on prop-

erty rights any longer. We must do better. We can do better, and I challenge this body to pursue ESA reform to focus on protecting our beautiful fisheries, wildlife, flora, and fauna.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't have said it better. Resources are being used to keep the species on the list indefinitely.

We should be thinking about the good of the species and the success of the recovery of the species. Instead, we want to keep them on this list to be used for other reasons. That is what we have to get to the bottom of.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN). He is a dear friend. He is someone who came into Congress with me and has risen to the chair of the Natural Resources Committee and is doing just a great job. He is one of my star members of the Western Caucus.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman NEWHOUSE not only for his leadership here tonight in setting up the Special Order but also his leadership on the Western Caucus, which is a voice for us on not just Western issues but rural issues all across the country. I am honored to be a part of the Western Caucus even though I reside in Arkansas, which I do say at one time was the Western frontier.

Over its 50-year life, as has been discussed, ESA has gone from being a law geared toward recovering at-risk species through conservation and has now become a weapon to control land and activities through a misguided concept of preservation.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we take a minute here and look at the difference between conservation and preservation.

Conservation, which the Endangered Species Act was built around, is the idea of being a good steward of the resources we have, of taking care of and tending to the habitat of these endangered species. It really is like being the gardener of the habitat.

Preservation is this idea that you can preserve something in the natural world, and you really can't do that. The way you preserve something that is living, Mr. Speaker, is, for instance, take a cucumber. You boil it in vinegar, and you preserve it as a pickle.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to say tonight is that conservation is for critters; preservation is for pickles. The Endangered Species Act, as it was written in 1973, was about conservation and taking care of these at-risk species.

I went back to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and I want to read here what the people who came before us set forth in Congress in the findings of the Endangered Species Act.

The very first finding was that "various species of fish, wildlife, and plants in the United States have been rendered extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation."

They pulled that out in the very first of their findings.

It goes on to say: "The United States has pledged itself as a sovereign state in the international community to conserve to the extent practicable the various species of fish or wildlife and plants facing extinction."

Then look at the purpose of the Endangered Species Act, Mr. Speaker, and I quote directly here: "The purposes of this chapter are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the treaties and conventions set forth in subsection (a) of this section."

Our men and women who came before us knew that protecting endangered species was all about conservation.

The Endangered Species Act was actually passed as a call to action and conservation, but it has devolved into a weapon for stagnation and leverage for political activism.

The irony is that a misused ESA actually does more harm than good to the animals and plants that it was put in place to protect.

As chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I have four guiding principles that form my priorities, and they are access, conservation, innovation, and transparency. In my view, the ESA falls short of all four.

The ESA often denies access to our public lands and negatively impacts private property rights. The ESA denies access.

The ESA fails at conservation, as has been mentioned many times here, as only a miniscule—less than 5 percent—of listed species have ever been delisted. It has already been brought out that the Endangered Species Act is a modern-day example of the "Hotel California." "You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."

In addition, the act disincentivizes innovation and private investment while at the same time lacks transparency.

We have cases of private landowners who are doing conservation and trying to take the actions necessary to help the habitat for species, and when those species get listed, it is always: "Hands off. Don't touch it. We are going to preserve it." That just doesn't work, and it is not ever going to work. The example is in the dismal recovery rate the way the ESA is being implemented.

We have made reforming the ESA a major part of the committee's business. If we wish to truly help threatened and endangered species, then we must strongly support science-based habitat management, and we cannot tolerate the weaponization of the ESA for political activism.

So far this Congress, the Natural Resources Committee has held two legislative hearings on bills that address

fundamental flaws with how the ESA is being implemented. These bills include three Congressional Review Act resolutions designed to provide oversight of Biden administration rulemakings that represent the true excesses of the ESA. Each of these CRA resolutions has been passed by the U.S. Senate on a bipartisan base.

In addition, three other bills heard by the committee deal with species that have long been recovered, the grizzly bear and the gray wolf, as have been mentioned. These species have been prevented from being delisted due to persistent litigation by activist groups. Even with Republican and Democratic administrations saying these species have been recovered, they are still on the list.

Following these hearings, the committee held a markup on April 27 that resulted in all six bills being reported favorably by the committee. I ask all of my colleagues to join in supporting these measures.

This is just the beginning. This Congress and the Natural Resources Committee will bring forth policies that promote transparency, science-based decisionmaking, flexibility, and voluntary conservation within the ESA.

It is my desire to have a hearing and, hopefully, a bipartisan markup on legislation to allow the restoration of America's wildlife habitat. Focusing on wildlife habitat restoration is definitely the ounce of prevention worth many pounds of cure when it comes to species recovery.

I look forward to working in partnership with Chairman NEWHOUSE and the Western Caucus to ensure that we continue to move the ball forward on bringing much-needed reform to the ESA. It has not been reauthorized in 50 years. Maybe we need to rewrite it and put it up for reauthorization.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman so much for his leadership.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WESTERMAN for his remarks.

How appropriate it is to look at the original language, the intent, to illustrate how far we have strayed from that mission. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for those great words.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I turn to somebody who I visited in his district, and I think he knows firsthand just to what extent the ESA has been weaponized to stop some of the things that, as a country, we have to accomplish.

Mr. STAUBER from the great State of Minnesota happens to be one of the vice chairmen of the Congressional Western Caucus. I would love to hear what the gentleman has to say about this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman's leadership not only in the Western Caucus but his leadership on very important issues such as the Endangered Species Act. I appreciate his giving me the opportunity this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the gray wolf being fully recovered.

Gray wolves have never been extinct in Minnesota. We currently estimate our population at over 2,700 gray wolves, while the ESA recovery plan goal for our State is 1,400. In fact, Minnesota has more wolves than the rest of the lower 48 States combined.

The Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations, along with our very own Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, have all agreed: It is a scientific fact that the gray wolf has recovered.

On my chart here, Mr. Speaker, you can see clearly the gray wolf has recovered. The blue dotted line is the Federal recovery plan, and the green dotted line is the minimum in Minnesota to reinstitute a wolf hunt. The wolf population is way up at the top, well above each threshold, as you can see.

Unfortunately, radical activist groups have weaponized the Endangered Species Act to keep the gray wolf listed. This misguided effort is a clear danger to our deer herds, livestock, and beloved family pets across Minnesota.

We have the scientists, the know-how, and the experience to responsibly manage the gray wolf, including implementing a hunting and trapping season.

When wolves are above their ESA targets, which they clearly are, Federal bureaucrats—unelected Federal bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.—or judges in California should not be able to take away our management powers just because of their ideological views or because they want to give favors to radical activist groups. They should follow the science.

That is why I helped introduce the Trust the Science Act with my friend and colleague Representative BOEBERT to delist the wolf and exempt its delisting from judicial review.

It is well past time to, once and for all, delist the gray wolf and reinstitute a hunt in Minnesota as part of our local management. Let's get the Federal Government out of the way and properly allow our State managers to manage the gray wolf population.

Our way of life in northern Minnesota depends on it.

It is simply "sumbuncheous" to keep the gray wolf on the endangered species list. It has recovered. Let's trust the science.

□ 2100

Mr. NEWHOUSE. I couldn't agree more that the gray wolf in my State has recovered, as well. They are prolific animals. They are flexible. They are nomadic. We really should declare a victory that they have recovered and celebrate that success and then use those resources to focus on other species that need our attention.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and someone that knows, from his perspec-

tive, not only a lot about agriculture but a lot about the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Endangered Species Act was drafted with the best of intentions, but it has simply failed to live up to its noble mission.

Since the ESA was passed in 1973, only 3 percent of species protected by the law have recovered to the point where they can be delisted. This is an abysmal recovery rate.

Burdensome and outdated regulations like the Endangered Species Act negatively impact our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and foresters, create frivolous lawsuits, halt critical infrastructure projects, stifle economic growth, and do not help the species in question. It fails to do that.

Just consider the northern long-eared bat. It is declining due to a disease with no cure, and the ESA will only further restrict our ability to help the species recover. It is an inflexible and outdated approach to species conservation.

America's working lands play a vital role in protecting threatened and endangered species, Mr. Speaker.

Voluntary, locally led conservation programs should be a model for the Federal Government rather than a top-down sledgehammer of red tape, or what I prefer to call, green tape.

It is high past time to modernize the Endangered Species Act to better protect species and to treat property owners, farmers, ranchers, and States as partners rather than obstacles.

The ESA should be amended to empower local stakeholders, incentivize voluntary conservation programs, and should emphasize actually recovering species, not simply leaving them on life support for years to come.

The simple truth is the programs that we have in the Agriculture Committee under a conservation title which are locally led, voluntary conservation programs, have led to the delisting of far more species that were either listed originally as endangered or threatened.

We know that works, and we know the Endangered Species Act in its current form does not.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. THOMPSON for elevating the voices of the people of Pennsylvania on this important issue.

He is right. The conservation programs that we have in this country have done a lot of good for species across the country.

That is why he is the chairman of the Agriculture Committee because he understands things like that.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Well, that and the fact I like to eat.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. That too. We all do once in a while.

I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN), a great agricultural State, and a beautiful district that I have visited.

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership, his

friendship, and for having this Special Order tonight.

We have talked about a lot of different species this evening, and I rise to discuss the misuse of the Endangered Species Act as it pertains to the lesser prairie chicken and its negative impact on farmers, ranchers, agriculture, and oil producers throughout The Big First District of Kansas.

On April 19, President Biden didn't listen to Congress when it came to our bipartisan joint resolution of disapproval on his administration's flawed and burdensome Waters of the U.S. or WOTUS rule. He vetoed it.

Soon, I hope that President Biden will have another opportunity to listen to producers when it comes to the lesser prairie chicken.

Last year, the Biden administration proposed the listing of the northern and southern distinct populations of the lesser prairie chicken as threatened and endangered, respectively, under the Endangered Species Act. That ruling became active this March.

Under the Endangered Species Act, the normal activity of agriculture and energy production can be construed as harm and harassment of the listed species and thus prohibited.

This rule fails to provide adequate protections for producers, even going so far as to require third-party approved grazing plans for ranchers.

To make matters worse, when the lesser prairie chicken rule went into effect in March, the Fish and Wildlife Service had not approved any third parties. To date, there are only three across the entire habitat area.

Grazing plans change, and ranchers are always adapting. It is unacceptable to force ranchers to agree to a grazing plan under the threat of a fine.

This is another example of Big Government overreach jeopardizing the livelihoods of American producers. The truth is, the lesser prairie chicken population thrives or dwindles based on rainfall, not the activity of agriculture energy producers.

In response to this misguided listing, which would add to President Biden's other policies that threaten our Nation's food security and energy independence, I introduced a joint resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to strike it down.

On April 28, the Committee on Natural Resources passed my resolution. On May 3, the U.S. Senate passed their version of the same resolution.

The designation of the lesser prairie chicken as threatened in places like Kansas is unacceptable, and this rule should have no force or effect until Congress is consulted.

I have been working hard on this issue since being elected to Congress, and I am encouraged to see that it passed the U.S. Senate.

Now it is time for my colleagues in the House to decide whether they want to stand for Big Government over regulation that will put producers out of business or stand for producers' rights

to their private property and self-determination.

If my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives are willing to listen to producers, the resolution will pass and make its way to President Biden's desk.

If that happens, I hope that President Biden will listen to the people this time.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MANN and appreciate his pointing out how important it is to listen to people in the local area who understand the environment, the climate that they live in, and that often they are earning their living by farming.

We have heard from several different parts of the country represented here with the different Members of Congress. So, I am going back to the great State of California to another one of the Western Caucus vice chairs, someone that is very outspoken on these issues, and has tremendous background and knowledge on the Endangered Species Act.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), for being part of this conversation and also elevating the voices of the people he represents.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it is really a pleasure to serve with Chairman NEWHOUSE on the Western Caucus as well as in other capacities here in the U.S. House.

Indeed, he has really invigorated the effort that the caucus is making on having these key issues on all manner of things, not just western but really, for the whole country, having so much to do with resources and such.

As we contemplate here tonight what the Endangered Species Act's original intention 50 years ago was when passed by Congress, and really, for those of us in production, agriculture, energy, minerals, just about anything that uses the basic building blocks of the economy and the things that our modern society needs, the Endangered Species Act has been weaponized against that.

What it has turned into now due to activism in the courts, the endless lawsuits and the way the courts reinterpret things is nothing close to what Congress would have passed back in the early 1970s.

Had they passed that, I think they would have been ridden out of town on a rail because it was so destructive toward the cornerstones of our economy and what has made America strong and independent in so many areas.

We agree with the purpose originally. It is to protect and recover vulnerable species. I think the focus at the time, really, was on the bald eagle with expansion from there to many other species that we deem valuable.

The world has well over a million species in it, and they are discovering more all the time; a lot of it in the insect world and such.

To think that we are going to just completely move all human beings, especially Americans, into caves or

something like that and say we can't affect the environment or touch it in any way is really unrealistic. Mankind has a piece in the world as well. That is even a biblical truth.

The Endangered Species Act, what it has turned into, is really harming the ability for people to get what they need.

Also, the focus hasn't really been on recovering species, which I think was well intended, because we have heard my colleagues talk about the ratio here of recovery. It is extremely low, especially if you put a ratio of dollars spent and pain inflicted on agriculture, on mining, on domestically produced products versus the number of species recovered. It is way out of whack.

You heard my colleague from Minnesota a minute ago talking about the recovery of the wolves. They have an incredible number of wolves in the upper Midwest, but the ESA can be misinterpreted and misused and abused to say we need to have wolves everywhere: in Oregon, in California, in Washington.

For that matter, should we introduce them into the Golden Gate Park and the Santa Monica Pier to make sure they have their share as well?

If you want to see a wolf, you are still going to be able to see a wolf in the areas where they have been more indigenous for a long time, and they have successfully recovered.

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This is what we put up with. They introduce them in areas where now livestock and people making a living in rural areas in Wyoming, Montana, northeast California, and Oregon have to suffer with the ideology of just introducing them everywhere and saying this is now going to make them not on the list anymore.

In my northern California area, for example, we had very important levee projects needed to be done for flood control around the north central area of Sacramento Valley, places like Hamilton City, Yuba City, Marysville, Sacramento, areas like that.

Well, they seemed to shop for a species du jour to stop projects, and what they settled on was the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, which not that many years ago U.S. Fish and Wildlife actually recommended for it to be delisted. In the meantime, however, they won't make a decision and take it off the list.

Now, mind you, you don't even find the beetle in some of these areas, but because the habitat for it exists in some of these areas, the law has been interpreted to be, well, if there is habitat there, if there is an elderberry bush and a beetle might come along and land in it or dwell in it, we have to leave that bush there. If you take that bush out in order to redo a levee, then we have to plant 50 or 70 more bushes somewhere else.

In one case here, we had to take out a couple hundred acres of orchard land

to have this mitigation area because they wanted to fix the dang levee that was already in existence and keep a town from flooding at the next rain because they are not maintaining the river in between the levee banks from all the siltation and such going on there. But that starts another whole narrative.

The beetle doesn't get delisted, and the levee work doesn't get done farther south in the Yuba City-Marysville area. This was going on 20, 30 years ago. A lot of great work has been done since then, but it has been made much more expensive and much more arduous because of the threat of lawsuit and the ESA.

I will remind you that years ago lives were lost and hundreds of millions of dollars of damage were done by a levee blowing out in that southern area of my district in Yuba City-Marysville on the Marysville side. With all that damage, three lives were lost, and finally the State of California lost a lawsuit for, I think, \$400 million because they were derelict in doing the work to maintain the levees, all because of this.

What I am talking about here as well is the ability to keep food on the table. This chart I have shows that California is responsible for, in some of these crops, 100 percent, well above 90 percent of the crops that Americans consume that come primarily from California.

We have the ESA stopping us from keeping farmland safe from floods but, also, at the same time building the water storage projects that are important to store water. Now, we were blessed this year with a tremendous amount of rain and snowpack, and we are really happy about it, but that doesn't happen every year. That is why we build these long-term water projects that store water for 5 years of drought, like Shasta Lake, Lake Oroville, and others. If we don't have those projects, we don't ride through that time.

They try to stop those projects from being further built, and they also seek to tear down projects like the Klamath dams, make hydroelectric green power with no CO₂. Much work needs to be done to keep crops on the table, to keep the electricity and the wires, keep the minerals coming to produce all the things we need to keep energy, all of that. The ESA needs to be revisited and actually focused on truly recovering species but not used as a weapon to stop things people need, our economies need, rural economies especially. That is some of the work we do in the Western Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate, again, Chairman NEWHOUSE's leadership on this and the opportunity to speak on it here tonight. There is much more that I could say; you know me.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. LAMALFA is correct, there are a lot of things that we should talk about. We have a limited amount of time, but he

is very good at expressing the needs of the people that he represents and making sure that people understand.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I am a farmer in my real life. I hope I talk plainly enough to get my thoughts across.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, in summation, as you have heard tonight, the Endangered Species Act, signed into law 50 years ago—and I think you probably picked this up—was designed to do two things: It was designed to prevent the species from going extinct and to promote its recovery. We need to return to that mission. We need to work with landowners and local governments, Tribes, and always keep the well-being of the species in mind in that work.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to be transparent for the American people. There is just too much at stake for us not to be. As members of the Congressional Western Caucus, we are going to continue to elevate the voice of the people of rural America on important issues like the Endangered Species Act and so many others.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-1016. A letter from the President and Chair, Board of Directors, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting a notification of export transactions; to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-1017. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Annual Reporting and Disclosure (RIN: 1210-AB97) received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-1018. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final priorities, requirements, and definitions — State-Tribal Education Partnership Program [Docket ID: ED-2022-OESE-0151] received May 17, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-1019. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedure for Refrigerated Bottled or

Canned Beverage Vending Machines [EERE-2021-BT-TP-0007] (RIN: 1904-AE67) received May 19, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1020. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Various Fragrance Components in Pesticide Formulations; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2019-0594; FRL-10970-01-OCSPP] received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1021. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Determination of Attainment by the Attainment Date for the 2012 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Standard; Pennsylvania; Allegheny County Non-attainment Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2021-0307; FRL-10965-02-R3] received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1022. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Spiropidion; Pesticide Tolerances; Technical Correction [EPA-HQ-OPP-2021-0356; FRL-9839-02-OCSPP] received May 19, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1023. A letter from the Assistant Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Clean Data Determination for the Detroit Area for the 2015 Ozone Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2023-0058; FRL-10634-02-R5] received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1024. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Partial Approval, Conditional Approval, and Partial Disapproval of Air Quality State Implementation Plans; Nevada; Infrastructure Requirements for Ozone [EPA-R09-OAR-2022-0957; FRL-10543-02-R9] received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1025. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; California; Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District [EPA-R09-OAR-2022-0795; FRL-10217-03-R9] received May 19, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1026. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Redesignation of the Detroit, MI Area to Attainment of the 2015 Ozone Standards [EPA-R05-OAR-2022-0004; FRL-9629-04-R5] received May 18, 2023, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-1027. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Erucamide In Pesticide Formulations; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0942; FRL-10868-01-