



# Abuse of the Endangered Species Act

Enacted in 1973, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was intended to prevent the extinction of certain species by helping them recover and then removing them from the threatened and endangered species list. However, since the ESA was enacted fewer than 2% of the species ever listed have been recovered.

Despite the fact that it has been over two decades since Congress reauthorized the ESA it has become a weapon for environmental groups who use the legislation to overwhelm the government and economically damage the livelihoods of our nation's livestock producers.

## Concerns with the ESA



**Extreme environmental groups use the ESA as a weapon against farmers and ranchers.**

For generations, ranchers have provided the nation with much needed food and fiber. Their work greatly depends upon on the long-term health and sustainability of America's public lands. Ranching is a unique part of our agricultural heritage that has evolved to efficiently fulfill the demands of the nation today.

- Livestock producers bear the brunt of severe land and resource restrictions and countless lawsuits brought by environmentalists and funded in part by taxpayer dollars.
- The groups abuse the law by constantly petitioning to add new species to the ESA list.
- The barrage of legal petitions causes the government to miss filing deadlines, enabling environmental groups to sue the government and reap taxpayer dollars as compensation.
- The lawsuits have cost the federal government and ranchers millions of dollars, draining resources away from any real species recovery efforts.

### PLC Recommendation:

Add safeguards to exclude or critically assess information submitted by organizations that have a financial interest in supporting the determination of listing threatened or endangered species.



**The ESA is currently administered with little regard to economic cost/benefit analysis.**

- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have entered a settlement agreement with environmental groups that will require them to make over 1,000 decisions on 251 species by 2016.
- This will cost the government (and ultimately taxpayers) more than \$200 million just on initial paperwork and decisions.
- The method of delisting recovered species is cumbersome.

### PLC Recommendation:

Set clear recovery goals and change the law to expedite the delisting or down listing of species when the best available science indicates that recovery goals have been met.

### PLC Recommendation:

Ensure that economic analysis is required prior to a listing decision and the resulting reports be provided to all those impacted by the decision prior to the decision being made.



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Livestock grazing is inaccurately blamed for detracting from conservation efforts.

- The best scientific and commercial information available shows livestock grazing to be compatible with or helpful to achieving conservation efforts.
- Often the lack of available scientific information leads to a listing decision and actions by the government that are not warranted – this is unacceptable.

## **PLC Recommendation:**

Support our federal agencies' adherence to the Federal Data Quality Act and the U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding qualification of scientific experts and the validity of scientific evidence used to inform environmental decisions.

## **PLC Recommendation:**

All scientific information relied upon by the government to make listing decisions (with exceptions for private property interests) should be made available to the public in advance of a decision being made.

**PLC urges Congress to update and modernize the ESA without delay so that family farmers and ranchers do not continue to shoulder the burden of an abused law led by outside special interests.**