

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: August 10, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso  Council File No: 18-0002-S90
Chief Legislative Analyst Assignment No: 18-07-0715

SUBJECT: Endangered Species Act.

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Bonin – Koretz) to include in the City’s 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program **OPPOSITION** to any legislation or administrative action that attempts to weaken or repeal the Endangered Species Act.

SUMMARY

The Endangered Species Act (ESA), introduced in 1973, is designed to protect and recover species and ecosystems that are imperiled primarily as a result of human impacts. Under the ESA, species may be listed as either endangered or threatened. "Endangered" means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

The Trump administration has proposed more than two dozen pieces of legislation, policy initiatives, and amendments designed to weaken the ESA, including stripping protections from the gray wolf and American burying beetle, and prohibiting the inclusion of the sage grouse from these protections.

The Resolution recommends opposition to any legislation or administrative action that attempts to weaken or repeal the Endangered Species Act, which safeguards critically imperiled wildlife populations from extinction through regulatory measures that protect fragile ecosystems.

BACKGROUND

In the 45 years since its inception, only ten of the nearly 2,000 species protected by the ESA have gone extinct. Of these ten, it is estimated that eight may have already been extinct upon being designated as endangered. A 2006 analysis found that without the ESA, as many as 226 species would have gone extinct. Bald eagles, black-footed ferrets, humpback whales, grizzly bears, Florida manatees and gray wolves are examples of species that have recovered or experienced a near recovery as a result of protections by the ESA.

One of the primary features of the ESA is the ability to designate certain species as “threatened.” Of the 1,464 animal species currently protected by the ESA, 299 have been listed as threatened. Species are designated as threatened if they are in danger of becoming endangered. Presently, species designated as threatened are given the same protections as endangered species, in efforts to prevent them from reaching endangered status. The Trump administration’s changes would no

longer grant these types of protections to all threatened species, and would allow a variety of considerations, including economic ones, to prevent a threatened species from receiving the protections necessary to protect it from further population decline.

If the changes proposed by the Trump administration take effect, the species that remain on the endangered list would still see their habitats protected, but it would become more difficult to list a new species for protection and easier to remove those now on the list. Additionally, the changes will allow economic consequences to be taken under consideration when choosing to protect plants and animals facing extinction.



Tristan Noack
Analyst

SMT:tcjn

Attachment: Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act, enacted in 1973, has safeguarded critically imperiled wildlife populations from extinction through regulatory measures that protect their fragile ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act has been credited with the resurgence of the bald eagle, American alligator, grizzly bear, humpback whale, and more, and has prevented extinction for 99 percent of all species listed with the Act; and

WHEREAS, in recent weeks, the Trump administration has proposed more than two dozen pieces of legislation, policy initiatives, and amendments designed to weaken the Endangered Species Act, including stripping protections from the gray wolf and American burying beetle, and prohibiting the inclusion of the sage grouse from protections; and

WHEREAS, these actions only serve to benefit large business interests like mining, drilling, and logging, while directly contributing to the likelihood of extinction for numerous native wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS, this recent wave of legislation has been opposed by over 100 lawmakers from the House of Representatives as well as environmental advocacy groups like the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Union of Concerned Scientists; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles should oppose this legislation as it has long been the position of the City to support environmental protections and animal rights concerns;

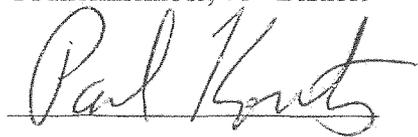
NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED that by adoption of this Resolution, with concurrence of the Mayor, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-2018 Federal Legislative Program OPPOSITION to any legislation or administrative action that attempts to weaken or repeal the Endangered Species Act.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:



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