

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



July 18, 2018

TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Senate EPW Committee Holds ESA Hearing

Virtually everyone agrees that the Endangered Species Act must be overhauled to reflect current realities and experience. But what begins as a simple conviction has always foundered when confronted by the details.

Earlier this month Senator Barrasso [R: WY] released a discussion draft [attached] for an ESA overhaul and yesterday Chairman Barrasso presided over a hearing on this draft held by the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Chairman Barrasso noted that since it was authorized only 54 out of 2,393 listed species, or 3%, have been “recovered.” Speaking as a medical doctor, Senator Barrasso noted that if he admitted 100 patients to a hospital and only 3 were discharged that he would lose his medical license.

Here are some highlights from the Barrasso ESA discussion draft:

- Elevates the role of states in increasing transparency in implementing ESA.
- Prioritizes resources to better meet goals including regulatory certainty.
- Supports stakeholders at the state and local level in terms of implementing the Act.
- 240,000 people involved with ESA implementation including volunteers with an annual expenditure of \$5.6 billion.
- But only 11,661 are US Fish and Wildlife/National Marine Fisheries employees.
- This means that the overwhelming burden of implementing ESA is at the State and local level.
- The Barrasso ESA draft has been endorsed by the Western Governors Assn.

This “discussion draft” won’t become law in the current Congress, but it could provide a path forward for real progress in the 116th Congress that will convene in January.

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