

## **UNDERMINING PROTECTIONS AND FUNDING FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES AND OTHER WILDLIFE**

Passed 210-205

### **SUMMARY:**

The House passed an appropriations bill with 24 provisions undermining the Endangered Species Act and other protections for wildlife, and cutting funding for endangered species, national wildlife refuges and other public lands, clean water, clean air, climate change and many other vital environmental programs. (*July 24, 2024, Roll Call No. 399*)

### **BACKGROUND:**

Federal funding for environmental programs is vital to efforts in our nation to protect our irreplaceable natural heritage and to leave a clean, healthy and vibrant environment to our children. Work by federal wildlife agencies to protect imperiled species and stop illegal trafficking; efforts by land management agencies to properly manage our national wildlife refuges, parks, and forests and build resilience in the face of climate change; and actions by regulatory agencies to keep our air and water clean and stop toxic pollution all depend on adequate funding of their programs. Despite their importance, programs that protect our environment and natural resources have been crippled by draconian budgets in recent years. Must-pass funding bills have also become vehicles for riders – controversial policy provisions undermining environmental protections that proponents hope will ride along on the underlying bill.

The FY 2025 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, H.R. 8998, would slash funding for the agencies that protect our natural resources and public health, including cutting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s flagship Endangered Species Program by more than \$9 million below current levels, cutting the chronically underfunded National Wildlife Refuge System’s funding by \$23 million below current levels despite increased annual visitation, and reducing the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget by 20 percent.

H.R. 8998 also includes 24 anti-wildlife riders. These include riders that undermine the Endangered Species Act and protections for individual imperiled species including the sage-grouse, grizzly bear, gray wolf, northern long-eared bat, Texas kangaroo rat, wolverine, and dunes sagebrush lizard. Other anti-wildlife riders in the bill include ones that prohibit funding for new rules that will help enhance conservation on national wildlife refuges and Bureau of Land Management lands; prohibit funding for new plans to better conserve sage-grouse; prohibit funding to minimize impacts from offshore fossil fuel projects on North Pacific right whales, North Atlantic right whales, and Gulf of Mexico Rice’s whales; prohibit funding for a new land protection plan for the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge; and prohibit funding to cancel or suspend oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or the Western Arctic.

### **OUTCOME:**

On July 24, 2024, the House passed H.R. 8998, 210-205. “No” was the pro-conservation vote.