

BLOCKING ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTIONS FOR THE NEW MEXICO MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE

Failed: 206-209

SUMMARY:

The House rejected an amendment to the FY 2019 Interior appropriations bill that would have blocked funding for the endangered New Mexico meadow jumping mouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and eliminated crucial recovery programs for the mouse that require federal funding. (*July 18, 2018, Roll Call No. 353*).

BACKGROUND:

The New Mexico meadow jumping mouse is a unique water-loving subspecies of meadow jumping mouse that lives only along the banks of southwestern streams. The mouse is semi-aquatic and is rarely found more than a few feet from running water. Unlike other subspecies of meadow jumping mouse, it is never found without suitable perennial water and riparian habitat. With its large back feet that assist it in swimming and leaping, the mouse can jump up to three feet—10 times that of its body length. These mice are also unique because of the amount of sleep they need—they may hibernate for up to 10 months out of the year. The mouse has been extirpated from 70 to 80 percent of its historic range and is now only found in five isolated mountain ranges in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and in the Rio Grande Valley. In all historical locations surveyed since 2000, populations have significantly declined and many have completely disappeared.

Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) introduced an amendment to the House Interior, Environment, Financial Services, and General Government Appropriations Act of 2019 (H.R. 6147) which would have blocked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) from spending funds to protect the endangered New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. Federal agencies, industries and landowners would still have been responsible for complying with the ESA with respect to the species, but FWS would have been prevented from spending any money on recovery efforts, law enforcement efforts or consultations. The impacts would have been severe both for the mouse and the regulated community. In addition to thwarting recovery efforts for the endangered mouse, this amendment also would have undermined the ESA itself. The ESA is our nation's most effective law for protecting wildlife in danger of extinction. Ninety-nine percent of species listed under the Act have survived, and many are on the path to recovery. Since 2011, the number of bills and riders that undermine or block ESA protections for particular species and other proposals to weaken the ESA, has increased steadily. In the 115th Congress, there were more than 110 of these damaging proposals.

OUTCOME:

On July 18, 2018, the House rejected the Pearce amendment, 206-209. “No” was the pro-conservation vote.