

## **ATTACKING WILDLIFE THROUGH FUNDING CUTS AND RIDERS**

Passed: 217-199

### **SUMMARY:**

The House passed its FY 2019 Interior appropriations bill that cut funding for wildlife and habitat and included more than a dozen riders undermining the Endangered Species Act (ESA). (*July 19, 2018, Roll Call No. 365*).

### **BACKGROUND:**

Federal funding for environmental programs is vital to efforts in our nation to protect our magnificent natural heritage and to pass on 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 House Interior, Environment, Financial Services, and General Government Appropriations Act of 2019 (H.R. 6147) included cuts for crucial environmental programs and a host of anti-environmental riders including more than a dozen that undermine the ESA. The bill included a steep 42 percent cut below the FY 2018 enacted level for the program to list new species under the ESA. The cuts would have potentially put wildlife at risk of extinction by delaying protections for numerous species and cut by 15 percent the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which supports acquisition of land for our national wildlife refuges, parks and forests. At the same time, the bill allocated \$14 million for an ill-defined reorganization of the entire Department of the Interior. Riders that undermine the ESA in the bill included ones that would block or strip federal protections for individual species including the gray wolf, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, the lesser prairie chicken, and the sage-grouse – including the very vulnerable bi-state sage-grouse population. Additional provisions would have reduced protections for the marbled murrelet in Washington State and prevented restoration of grizzly bears to the North Cascades ecosystem. Still another provision would have blocked funding for listed species if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service failed timely completion of required five-year reviews, potentially affecting approximately 700 endangered and threatened animals and plants currently with past-due five-year reviews. Finally, the bill included several provisions that would have precluded judicial review for massive water projects in California, endangering salmon runs and other native fish in the San Francisco Bay-Delta.

### **OUTCOME:**

On July 19, 2018, the House passed H.R. 6147, 217-199. “No” was the pro-conservation vote. Nearly none of the anti-environmental riders ended up in the final FY19 Interior appropriations bill that was included in P.L. 116-9.