

**Izaak Walton League of America · Trout Unlimited**  
**The Wildlife Society**

July 26, 2011

**RE: Support for Representative Dicks amendment to strike the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing/critical habitat rider from the Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill (HR 2584).**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our organizations' thousands of sportsmen conservationists nationwide, we are writing in support of the amendment offered by Representative Dicks to strike the above-referenced ESA rider from HR 2584. Our organizations have worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) since the inception of the ESA on protecting and recovering endangered species, and we have found the law to be an essential tool for conserving fish and wildlife resources. We oppose the ESA rider because it would prevent the FWS from implementing its species listing program or from designating habitat critical to the recovery of listed species.

The ESA is not perfect and it can be improved, but increasing the risk of extinction to species, as this rider would do, is not the right approach. Interior Secretary Salazar is leading an effort to review the law and its implementation to seek administrative improvements. We urge Congress to work with the Secretary to ensure a full and effective review of the ESA, rather than precipitously remove one of its greatest assets.

The ESA is one of the nation's most vital natural resources laws. Once listed as threatened or endangered, nearly extinct species receive critical protections against unlawful take of individuals of the species and for the habitat upon which their meager populations are sustained.

Therefore, we were deeply disappointed to see the ESA rider, yet another harmful provision of a bill laden with bad policies and excessive funding cuts. The ESA rider prevents the Fish and Wildlife Service from spending any money in Fiscal Year 2012 on listing new plants and animals under the ESA, designating critical habitat, or upgrading

species from threatened to endangered. It would increase the risk of extinction of imperiled plants and animals, including species of great value to our organizations, such as the Rio Grande cutthroat trout and the wolverine.

Protection and recovery of endangered species helps to conserve watersheds and landscapes that also help to sustain fishing and hunting across the Nation. Our members are part of the 42 million Americans who spend \$76 billion each year in pursuit of the hunting and angling sports afield that they love. Those sportsmen, and our organizations, want to see the ESA implemented effectively, therefore, we urge you to support the Dicks amendment to strike the ESA listing and critical habitat rider.

Sincerely,

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