



PARTNERSHIP *for the* WEST

September 19, 2005

The Honorable Richard Pombo  
Chair, House Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo:

Endangered Species Act (ESA) reform is the number one priority for the Partnership for the West. That is why a large number of our members are so thrilled to see the bipartisan introduction of the H.R. 3824, the Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005 (TESRA).

The tens of thousands of members and supporters of the Partnership for the West work for policies that promote a common sense balance between a clean environment and a healthy, growing economy. The ESA reform package you and your colleagues have crafted would go a long way toward helping America achieve this balance.

As you know, Westerners care deeply about conserving our environment, our natural resources and the wildlife that inhabit our lands. Instead of encouraging Westerners to actively conserve habitat and help species in trouble, the current ESA punishes innovation and gets in the way real conservation. It is no wonder that this law has amassed a 99 percent rate of failure in one of its core missions – species recovery.

It is long-past time that Congress updated and modernized this law to:

- Require independently verifiable science in ESA decision-making;
- Require recovery plans;
- Provide real incentives to landowners for species conservation;
- Codify the "no surprises" rule;

- Give local, state and tribal governments more of a say in the ESA process; fairly compensate landowners who lose the use of their land as a result of ESA; and
- Reform the disastrous critical habitat process.

TESRA does all of this and more.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers of Congress as ESA reform legislation moves through the process. Thank you again for the years of courage and leadership you have shown on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JS', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a smaller 'S'.

Jim Sims  
Executive Vice President

cc: House Resources Committee  
Interior Secretary Gale Norton  
The White House  
Western Governors' Association  
Western Governors  
Western Congressional delegations