

H.R. 1662, the Sound Science for Endangered Species Act Planning Act of 2003

Sound Science and ESA Actions

- Requires the Secretary to set standards for the scientific and commercial data that is used to take actions under the ESA.
- Requires the Secretary to give greater weight to scientific or commercial data that is empirical or has been field-tested or peer-reviewed.

Sound Science and the Listing Process

- Sets minimum standards for the scientific and commercial data used in listing determinations.
- Listing actions must be supported by field data on the species.
- The listing agency must accept data on the species collected by landowners.

Sound Science and Recovery Planning

- Agencies preparing recovery plans are required to identify, solicit, and accept scientific or commercial information that would assist in preparing a recovery plan.

Sound Science and Peer Review

- Every proposed listing, delisting, recovery plan, or consultation under the ESA would be reviewed by a peer review panel of three non-biased scientists.

Sound Science and the Consultation Process

- Requires the Secretary to solicit and consider information provided by the State.
- Allows an applicant to: (1) prior to the release of a draft biological opinion, submit and "discuss" with the Service and action agency information about the proposed action and possible reasonable and prudent alternatives; (2) obtain information used to develop the biological opinion and reasonable and prudent alternatives; and (3) provide comments prior to publication of the final biological opinion.
- The service must include the applicant's suggestions or explain why such suggestions were rejected.
- Comments and other information submitted shall be available to the public.