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Thomas Donnelly

April 9, 2003

The Honorable Greg Walden  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Walden:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and membership of the National Water Resources Association, NWRA, I am writing to thank you for your efforts to improve the Endangered Species Act, ESA, and to express our strong support for your legislation, the "Sound Science for Endangered Species Act Planning Act of 2003, H.R. 1662.

As water users in Oregon, and the 16 other Western States, our members have long been aware of and negatively impacted by questionable science used in the implementation of the ESA. The inclusion of "sound science" in the decision-making processes, is one of NWRA's top ESA priorities, H.R. 1662 would help us to address this priority. Your legislation would require greater weight to be given to "scientific or commercial data that is empirical or has been field-tested or peer-reviewed." We agree completely with this principle and believe it is in keeping with the goal of the ESA.

NWRA supports the peer review of all data collection by impartial experts for species listing, recovery plan development, designation of critical habitat, and development of recommendations for endangered species habitat, including flow recommendations. H.R. 1662 would also provide greater state participation in Section 7 consultations and increased public access in developing biological opinions. These are all welcome improvements in the act.

Again, thank you for your efforts to improve the ESA. Please know our members and staff are eager to work with you in building additional support for H.R. 1662.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Donnelly  
Executive Vice President

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