



## National Association of Conservation Districts

July 10, 2018

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Chairman  
Congressional Western Caucus  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gosar:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 locally-elected men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on all private lands and many public lands in the United States.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) must be modernized, and voluntary conservation plays an important role in achieving this. The ESA legislative package the Congressional Western Caucus has announced this week emphasizes the needs of communities impacted by listings and focuses on scientific consensus rather than a politically-driven agenda. NACD supports this package requiring the federal government to work with all public and private partners, including conservation districts and tribal governments, involved in managing the critical habitat for listed species.

NACD appreciates members of the House wanting to develop programs to provide tax incentives to landowners to encourage species recovery on private lands. The importance of codifying safe harbor agreements and candidate conservation agreement with assurances will directly benefit listed species and private landowners.

We strongly believe that local decision-making, rather than litigation, is the best way to address environmental challenges and achieve positive results for our threatened species.

NACD thanks you for your consideration and introduction of this important legislative package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent Van Dyke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brent Van Dyke  
President, NACD