

Your Name
Your Address
City State Zip

Representative Contact
Address
City, State Zip

April 21, 2018

Dear Representative,

I am writing today to express my concerns about three current items with a request for the following actions:

- Please oppose H.R. 4239 which threatens the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- Please oppose the following five bills: H.R. 424; H.R. 717; H.R. 1274; H.R. 2603; and H.R. 3131 which currently threaten the Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Please support H.R. 502 which proposes permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This year, we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This landmark conservation legislation has protected millions if not billions of birds in its century-long history. Congress passed the MBTA in 1918 in response to public outcry over the mass slaughter of birds, which threatened egrets and other species with extinction. Today, this law protects birds from 21st-century threats, which has led to common sense solutions like covering oil pits and flagging transmission lines that protect countless birds each year from otherwise needless deaths. In all, the MBTA prohibits killing or harming more than 1,000 species of America's birds.

The MBTA is currently facing the most serious attack on the law in its one hundred years. A measure that would gut the MBTA has been introduced as an amendment to H.R. 4239, a bill written to weaken environmental protections to facilitate oil and gas drilling. The bill is pending in the House. The administration followed suit when the Department of the Interior announced it will no longer enforce the MBTA in cases of incidental bird deaths, effectively giving a blank check to industry to avoid preventable bird deaths. I want to see this Congress build on our nation's 100-year conservation ethic and reject misguided efforts that would undo the progress our country has made in conserving birds.

Another landmark conservation tool currently being threatened is the Endangered Species Act, our nation's most effective law for protecting wildlife in danger of extinction. There are five bills that would weaken the ESA by prioritizing politics over science and undercutting citizens' ability to help enforce the law (H.R. 424, H.R. 717, H.R. 1274, H.R. 2603, and H.R. 3131). The ESA has been successful because it relies on the best available science to make decisions, and empowers citizens to participate and ensure adequate implementation of the law. The latest scientific studies indicate that ¾ of all species could disappear in the coming centuries. The ESA has prevented more than 99% of listed species from going extinct. Scientists, not Congress, should be making decisions about which species need protection.

And finally, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF-established in 1965) is set to expire on 9/30/18 unless there is action from Congress. This is America's most important conservation and recreation program, which has saved places in nearly every state and county in the U.S.

Eliminating LWCF, cutting its funding, or placing restrictions on its use would undermine the economic asset that is our federal, state, and local public lands. Without funding, important land areas will inevitably be sold to developers, frustrating public access and destroying the integrity of the landscape for wildlife and for hunters, anglers, ranchers, hikers, and all others who enjoy America's special places. I am asking you to support H.R. 502, which proposes permanent reauthorization of the LWCF. I also hope that you will vote to maintain strong budget allocations so that the LWCF can maintain its effectiveness.

Thank you for your support and attention in these matters,