



Hon. Doris O. Matsui

Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui

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Serving California's 5th District

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MATSUI SUPPORTS RESPONSIBLE REFORM OF ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Joins bipartisan coalition to introduce sensible legislation

Washington, DC –Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) urged common sense reform of the Endangered Species Act as she joined with a bipartisan coalition of members to introduce substitute legislation to recover threatened and endangered species without shifting the burden to landowners and taxpayers. A fact sheet on the substitute legislation is attached.

As the House of Representatives debates the legislation, Matsui issued the following statement:

“Since its enactment in 1973, the Endangered Species Act has protected hundreds of species from extinction. This includes the Bald Eagle – a bird whose history is interwoven with our nation’s history – and the California Condor. Because of this legislation, both of these species have been saved from extinction.

“And over three decades later the spirit behind the Endangered Species Act remains sound: we must be responsible stewards of our environment – ensuring it will continue to protect our natural resources and native species today and in the future. The reforms we approve today will forever affect our ability to do this.

“It is important that what we do now strikes a balance between our responsibility as stewards and our economic needs. Those on the economic side – farmers, ranchers and private property advocates – make valid arguments that we would be remiss to ignore. Yes, the Endangered Species Act and its intent are critical, but Congress should reform the ESA so people can maximize the use of their land while working with the federal government and conservationists to protect endangered species.

“However, as written, the legislation before us H.R. 3824, is not the answer. For this reason, I am supporting the bi-partisan substitute amendment. This bi-partisan amendment makes the necessary reforms to the ESA while maintaining strong protections for endangered species.

“While both would repeal the Critical Habitat requirement included in the ESA, only the substitute replaces it with enforceable recovery plans – a vital component to species recovery – that focuses on using public lands to protect species. Only when public lands are not an option to protect a species, then and only then would we use private land. In essence, an alternative of last resort.

“Actually, H.R. 3824 will increase the burden placed on private property owners by weakening the Federal government’s responsibility not to put species in jeopardy. As a result, more species will become threatened and endangered, creating bigger headaches for private landowners down the road.

(Continued...)



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“By contrast, the bi-partisan substitute preserves strong protections while at the same time works with landowners through a Private Property Conservation Program. In creating this, landowners will have an incentive to establish conservation programs on their property becoming a partner in recovering endangered species and preventing others from joining that list.

“H.R. 3824 poses a false choice between land use and our responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species. The bi-partisan substitute amendment finds that balance between these important environmental and economic concerns.”

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