

The Honorable Senator Mike DeWine  
140 Senate Russell Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator DeWine:

I am writing you to strongly urge you to oppose any forthcoming senate legislation that would as Congressman Pombo's bill does, dismantle or weaken the protection provided species by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). If such a bill were to become law, it would undermine the progress that has been made in preserving endangered species and the habitats on which they depend for survival. We would return to a time when extinctions were on the horizon.

As I'm sure you know, Senator DeWine, approximately 90% of Ohio's original wetlands have been converted to other uses. The remaining wetlands are important to the areas where they are located, which includes Lake Erie. Many species from fish to birds depend on the remaining wetlands to provide food and shelter. Migratory birds use these wetlands as stopovers during migration. Some birds such as the American Bald Eagle are endangered; others are covered by Migratory Bird Treaties. We must protect what remains. A law that embodies the provisions of Congressman Pombo's bill would seriously curtail the protection currently afforded wetlands from development and pollution and would negatively impact the creatures that depend on them.

As the New York Times noted in an editorial noted on February 20, 2006, the House accepted the argument that the ESA is a failure because less than 1% of the approximately 1200 species on the endangered list have recovered sufficiently to be delisted. A better measure of the worth of the ESA is that the populations of about 2/3 of the species on the endangered list, for which data are available, are either stable or improving. Somehow, Congressman Pombo overlooked that statistic.

Fortunately, the population of the American Bald Eagle has increased to the point that it may soon be ready for delisting. I believe that the recovery of the Bald Eagle illustrates the success of the ESA. The New York Times editorial referenced earlier noted that the recovery of the eagle was aided in large measure by the banning of DDT in 1972, but habitat protection provided by the ESA when the bill became law in 1973 played a crucial role as well. Here in Ohio there were only 4 active eagle nests in the entire state in 1979. According to a recent survey by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), there are now 143 active nests in Ohio.

The increase in the population of the American Bald Eagle in the US as in Ohio did not happen overnight. Thirty-three years elapsed between the time the ESA became law and the number of active eagle nests in Ohio reached the present level. These numbers illustrate the success of the ESA, but they also show that endangered populations may not respond quickly to protection. Population recovery takes time.

I hope you take pride, Senator DeWine, in the recovery of the American Bald Eagle in Ohio and will protect the ESA now and in the future from those who would destroy it, as you have steadfastly defended the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from those who would sacrifice the refuge for oil.

Sincerely,