



For Immediate Release

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Vote Coming Next Week on Recovering America's Wildlife Act

A broad coalition of interests, including nonprofit organizations, sportsmen's groups, businesses, industry leaders, zoos, homeowners associations, nature centers, and community leaders are encouraging Members of the U.S. House of Representatives to vote for the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* when it comes up for a vote next week, likely as early as Tuesday, June 14.

Speaking for the 175-member Texas coalition that supports this legislation, Janice Bezanson, senior policy director of Texas Conservation Alliance, described the bill. "This is one of most important bills of the last half century for the future of our country's wildlife. Its funding would help stabilize at-risk wildlife populations and keep them off the Endangered Species list – and that would help everybody."

The *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* would provide \$1.3 billion per year in federal funds to state wildlife agencies, including \$50 million to Texas. The state agencies would in turn disburse the funds to conservation organizations, land trusts, state agencies, municipalities, universities, landowners, and others to support habitat restoration, research, and education projects that benefit at-risk wildlife, nature education, and wildlife-associated recreation. Each wildlife agency – in Texas it would be the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – would carefully assess the value of the projects proposed, and require a 25% fund match, to assure that the money is well spent.

"Proactive conservation efforts to stabilize at-risk wildlife populations cost the taxpayers less money if started early, *before* we encounter expensive emergency-room measures," continued Bezanson. "This funding bill would actually save money in the long run."

Keeping wildlife off the endangered species list avoids problems that businesses such as oil and gas exploration face when an endangered species listing triggers regulatory hurdles. Our multi-billion outdoor recreation industry would also benefit, as projects give Texans more places to hike, paddle, bike, birdwatch, photograph nature, and hunt and fish. Expanded cost-share and technical assistance programs for landowners could help ranchers improve native rangeland, benefiting livestock as well as wildlife. Projects to protect water quality, eliminate invasive species, restore native grasslands and woodlands, and expand outdoor education programs would benefit the state's economy as well as its natural environment.

More than a third of the Members of Congress have already cosponsored the bipartisan *Recovering America's Wildlife Act*. "People really care about wildlife and our beautiful natural world," concluded Bezanson. "Hearing from their constituents has brought many Members of the U.S. House of

Representatives on board in support. We just need to be sure that Congress hears from people now, right before the vote happens, that we want them to help wildlife and our wild places.”

Learn more about the *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* and the Texas Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife by visiting www.txwildlifealliance.org.

Download photos of some of the species and landscapes that will benefit from the *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* at <https://www.txwildlifealliance.org/photo-gallery>.