

September 16, 2005 update

Pombo Extinction Bill in Congress

The Center for Biological Diversity has sent out an alert that a bill to eliminate key protections of the Endangered Species Act is slated to be introduced in Congress next week.

Representative Pombo's extinction bill would eliminate key protections of the Endangered Species Act. Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA) has stated that next week he will introduce a bill that would greatly rewrite the Endangered Species Act. Representative Pombo has long carried the message of developers and extractive industries and is Congress's loudest opponent of endangered species protections. Pombo is also chair of the House Resources Committee.

A hearing on the bill is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, and a committee vote on Thursday, September 22.

Pombo has not yet released the full legislative language, but according to the summary, the bill would:

- * completely repeal protections for endangered species critical habitat
- * remove protections for species listed as "threatened" under the law
- * allow political appointees - such as Secretary of Interior Gale Norton - instead of scientists, to determine what constitutes the best available science
- * exempt federal agencies from the requirement to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on actions that might impact endangered species
- * bankrupt the endangered species program by forcing the Fish and Wildlife Service to pay developers to comply with the law.

The Endangered Species Act is America's safety net for wildlife, fish and plants on the brink of extinction. Rep. Pombo's bill would eliminate many of the Act's protections for wildlife, including critical habitat protections.

The Center for Biological Diversity press release about the Pombo bill is at <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/swcbd/press/pombo9-15-05.html>

You can look up members of the House Resources Committee, which will hear the bill next week, at: <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/fullcommittee/members.htm>

You can sign up for Center for Biological Diversity action alerts at <http://actionnetwork.org/BIODIVERSITY/join.html?r=Op1ZMbM13RITE>