
August 27, 2019

Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

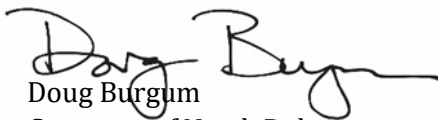
Dear Mr. Oliver:

The Western Governors' Association (WGA) appreciates the effort of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to revise regulations regarding the implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Through its Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative, WGA has, over the past several years, led a regional discussion on means to improve species conservation and enhance the efficacy of the ESA. The Initiative employed public workshops, webinars, work sessions and other tools to engage a wide array of stakeholders in substantive and transparent discussion on the content and operation of the ESA. The input generated by the Initiative informed Western Governors' policy proposals to advance voluntary conservation efforts and improve the efficacy of the Act.

Having worked diligently for many years on species conservation on a bipartisan basis, Western Governors recognize that much can be accomplished by collaborating with the agency to make administrative improvements to the Act's regulations. As stated in WGA [comments](#) submitted on the NMFS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed rules in 2018, there are several proposals that align directly or conceptually with WGA Policy Resolution 2017-11, *Species Conservation and the Endangered Species Act*, and its accompanying recommendations.

As NMFS proceeds to implement final regulations, we hope that you will regard Western Governors, through WGA, as an informed, invested and reliable resource and partner. We look forward to greater state involvement in voluntary species conservation efforts and increased regional coordination in prioritizing conservation actions for at-risk species.

Sincerely,



Doug Burgum
Governor of North Dakota
Chair, WGA



Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
Vice Chair, WGA