



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

July 19, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

I am responding to the statement made by Chairman Barrasso at the Environmental and Public Works Committee hearing held on July 17, 2018. Chairman Barrasso entered into the hearing record the Western Governors' Association's (WGA) letter dated February 14, 2018 that offered comments regarding Chairman Barrasso's proposed legislation to amend the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Chairman Barrasso then stated, "This [WGA] letter of support is signed by Governor of Hawai'i, a Democrat and Vice Chair of the Western Governors' Association, Governor Ige, so there has been a submission by a Democrat" as bipartisan support for the proposed legislation.

As Governor of the State of Hawai'i, I do not support Chairman Barrasso's proposed legislation. I cannot support the proposed legislation in its current form. As drafted, new limitations on judicial review, increased responsibilities for states without adequate funding, and changes to how science guides ESA implementation could have extremely negative impacts on the recovery of endangered species. In addition to new obstacles that it could create, the proposal fails to solve the longstanding problem of adequately funding the current mandates of the ESA.

To be clear, I signed the February 14 letter solely in my capacity as Vice Chair of the WGA. WGA represents the Governors of 19 western states and 3 U.S. territories in the Pacific. WGA develops bipartisan policies, encourages information sharing and takes collective action on issues critical to the western United States. WGA provided comments on certain areas of the proposed legislation where there was bipartisan agreement and was silent on other areas.

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My role as WGA Chair, and Vice Chair at the time the February 14 letter was signed, does not necessarily reflect my position as an individual Governor. In fact, the letter as a whole does not represent the views of any individual Governor, as explicitly spelled out in its closing paragraph:

Each Governor reserves judgment on whether to continue supporting this bill as it moves through the legislative process.

While I cannot support Chairman Barrasso's proposed legislation, I appreciate Governor Matt Mead's effort to amend the Endangered Species Act in a bipartisan manner through the Western Governors' Association's process. I want to emphasize that the process is important, and that true bipartisanship is Republicans and Democrats in Congress working together to draft this legislation.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Y. Ige". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "D".

David Y. Ige  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

c: The Honorable Mazie Hirono  
The Honorable Brian Schatz  
James Ogsbury, Western Governors Association