

Protect Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 is bad for wildlife, because it is bad for people. It has largely failed to protect endangered plants and animals because the threat of regulatory “takings” creates perverse incentives, inducing property owners to ensure that their land never becomes habitat or potential habitat for an endangered species.

- Congress should replace the ESA with a non-regulatory, incentive-based conservation program to encourage private landowners to protect and provide habitat. Property owners’ natural incentive to be good stewards of their land can work in concert with effective species protection.
- Absent reforms that eliminate the ESA’s punitive land use regulations, policies should

require just compensation for landowners who are deprived of the right to use their land and whose lands are devalued by government regulation.

- Another policy change that would help species would be elimination of the estate tax. The costs of these taxes often force families to sell off estate properties to developers to pay for the estate taxes on the property. In many cases, individuals would rather keep the properties free from development, but high inheritance taxes make that impossible.

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