



THE GARDEN CLUB of AMERICA
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CONSERVATION/NATIONAL AFFAIRS & LEGISLATION COMMITTEES

September 21, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne,

We are writing to you as members of the Garden Club of America (GCA), with its 197 clubs and 18,000 members, as well as Chairmen of the National Affairs and Legislation and the Conservation Committees of GCA. We are deeply concerned about the proposed rule changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Our Committees have followed the ESA from its inception in 1973, as it has evolved through numerous Republican and Democratic Administrations. While most legislation is not perfect, the Endangered Species Act has stood the test of time and should be regarded with deference and certainly not overhauled through rulemakings at the end of an Administration.

The proposed rules seriously weaken the intent of the ESA and will critically endanger fish, wildlife, plants and their ecosystems on an increasingly fragile planet. Given the severe challenges ahead, the strength and guidance of the ESA is needed more now than at any other time in the 35 year history of the Act. In the waning days of this Administration, we urge you to use your leadership and provide a legacy that fosters protection of biodiversity for future generations. The Endangered Species Act has served us well in our efforts to provide balance and stewardship for a planet whose natural treasures are increasingly imperiled, if not vanishing altogether. We strongly urge you to reject the proposed changes to the ESA.

We will be following future developments through our Committees and in conjunction with our Congressional Representatives. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Derry MacBride
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