PHONE CALLS

Phone calls should be simple and direct. You should include your name, location, who you’re trying to contact and what you would like them to do. As these offices receive a high volume of phone calls, it is important to keep it short.

FOR HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES

“Hi, my name is [first, last name] and I’m from [location within district]. I want Representative [name]/you to oppose H.R. 717, the Listing Reform Act, because of its proposed amendments to the Endangered Species Act. The proposed amendments would weaken the legislation and increase the likelihood that certain species may go extinct. We cannot allow the Act to be weakened and are asking Representative [name]/you to oppose any bill, rider, or other policy proposal that weakens protections for endangered species and habitat.”

FOR SENATORS

“Hi, my name is [first, last name] and I’m from [location within district]. I am concerned about changes to the Endangered Species Act that will weaken this important law. We cannot allow the Act to be weakened and are asking Senator [name]/you to oppose any bill, rider, or other policy proposal that weakens protections for endangered species and habitat.”
At a town hall meeting, you are typically allowed one question. While depth of knowledge and interest area may vary, try and avoid those questions that permit a simple “yes” or “no” answer.

- “Hi, my name is [first, last name] and I’m from [location within district].”
- “What are you doing to help endangered species in our state/district?”
- “How are you going to continue working to restore habitat for threatened and endangered species?”

More specific questions relating to the Listing Reform Act, (H.R. 717)*

- “What is your position on H.R. 717, the Listing Reform Act, which would allow economic costs be a determining factor when listing endangered species – thus taking science out of the equation when evaluating whether a species should be listed?”
- “If H.R. 717 permits consideration of economic costs in reviewing a petition, what would keep lawmakers from concluding that all new listings are prohibitively expensive?”

*H.R. 717 is sponsored by Pete Olson (R-TX-22) and is Co-Sponsored by Michael Burgess (R-TX-26), Louie Gohmert (R-TX-1), and Brian Babin (R-TX-36)
IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Getting a face-to-face meeting with your Congressional member can be difficult, and will most likely result in a meeting with a Congressional aide. To schedule a meeting with your Member of Congress, call the district office where you would like to meet. The office may ask you to send a request in writing, be specific about what you want (a personal meeting) and what you would like to discuss (The Endangered Species Act). Be persistent in following up with your request.

Basic introductions should be made at the beginning of your meeting, and should include a positive note, such as something you’ve enjoyed about their work:

• “Hi, my name is [first, last name] and I’d like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I admire your work on [project]/I appreciate your vote on [bill number].”

Additional talking points should be clear and organized to represent your concerns on a particular topic.
ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT TOOLKIT: Talking Points

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

FOR HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES

• “Several bills have been introduced, such as H.R. 717, which are designed to amend the Endangered Species Act. What is your boss doing to protect endangered species?”

• “I would like your boss to oppose H.R. 717 since its passage would allow lawmakers to consider the economic costs associated with listing a certain species, which are likely to be high and undesirable.”

• “I am afraid amendments to the ESA will impact [cite specific endangered species] which are found/have habitat within our own district.”

FOR SENATORS

• “There are attempts to amend the ESA. What is your boss doing to protect endangered species?”

• “I am concerned about legislation that would weaken the ESA. I hope your boss will oppose any that do so.”

• “I am interested because our state has [cite specific endangered species] and protecting them and their habitat provides so many benefits to the ecosystem and to the people within our state.”

—NEXT PAGE—

AMERICAN FORESTS
Remember to stay polite and respectful, even when you and your Member of Congress or their Congressional aide seem to disagree on something.

- I see your position and understand the pressures you’re facing, but I am still concerned for the impacts this will have on our district/state.”

At the end of the meeting, thank them for their time. Send a written thank you via email to their office in the days following the meeting with any additional information they may want, or any additional information they have promised.

- “[Name of staffer with whom you met], thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. I hope you take my concerns into consideration as this legislation moves forward and vote in the best interest of our district and endangered species.”
- “I promised to follow up with your office with any additional information that you’ve requested [be specific if relevant]/I will check in with your office at a later date concerning any information that I have requested [be specific if relevant].”
Members of Congress and their staff read the news, especially from their districts and states. Thus, letters to the editor are another great way to voice concerns that may get seen by your elected officials on the Hill. Call your local paper or visit its website to find out how to submit the letter to the editor below.

Dear Editor:

Congress recently proposed the Listing Reform Act (H.R. 717) that will weaken the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA is one of our Nation’s most effective laws, protecting more than 99% of our imperiled plants and wildlife from extinction.

The proposed bill would weaken the Act by allowing for the economic costs of saving a species be a determining factor in its listing. This would allow lawmakers, and not scientists, determine which species gets added. It allows Congress to determine that a particular species is too costly to save and will have a disastrous effects on species facing extinction.

I urge your readers to contact their Representatives to oppose H.R. 717 and to support the Endangered Species Act.

Thank you,
[First, last name]
[Return Address]
[Email]