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Alliance of Texas Conservation Groups, Sportsmen, and Businesses Support Dedicated Wildlife Conservation Funding

Currently, seven members of the Texas Congressional delegation, from both sides of the aisle, have signed on as co-sponsors of [H.R. 4647](#), the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, joining more than 70 of their colleagues from across the country.

H.R. 4647 has gained widespread, bipartisan co-sponsorship due to its innovative approach to address the nationwide crisis of declining fish and wildlife populations. The bill dedicates \$1.3 billion annually back to the states to assist species at risk of becoming endangered.

Leaders of the energy, outdoor recreation retail, manufacturing, and automotive industries, along with sportsmen and other conservation groups, identified oil and gas royalties collected from production on federal lands and waters as the best source of funding. These royalties would provide crucial support for wildlife without raising taxes or taking funds from other wildlife or land conservation programs.

Similar bi-partisan legislation was filed in the US Senate on July 17th by Senators Jim Risch (R-ID), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND). The primary difference between the bills is that H.R. 4647 provides dedicated funding while [S. 3223](#) funding is subject to appropriation, which means money may not be available on a reliable basis.

“It’s important to understand the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is not an extension of the Endangered Species Act,” said John Shepperd of the Texas Foundation for Conservation, speaking on behalf of the Texas Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife. “In fact, the goal of this legislation is to change our approach to conservation and keep species off the Endangered Species List through early action and education. We have been in a reactionary mode for decades, and typically don’t take substantive action until a wildlife crisis is already upon us.”

“The Senate bill underscores the urgency of the increasing number of wildlife species at risk of becoming endangered,” said Janice Bezanson, executive director of Texas Conservation Alliance. “Conservationists, developers, leaders in the oil and gas industry, and others who

have a stake in keeping species off the Endangered Species List, will be working with Senate leaders to strengthen S.3223 by adding the dedicated funding provisions of H.R. 4647.”

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 fueled the recovery of pronghorn, elk, bighorn sheep, numerous waterfowl, and other game species. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would extend those recovery efforts to all [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#), including non-game species.

State fish and wildlife agencies are currently funded at less than 5% of what’s needed to implement congressionally mandated state wildlife action plans. These plans are roadmaps designed to help recover at-risk fish and wildlife before they become endangered. Texas has more than 1,300 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including iconic wildlife such as Texas horned lizards, Northern pintail ducks, and burrowing owls.

Early intervention avoids the high cost of recovery and allows business and industry to proceed without the regulatory uncertainty associated with the presence of a threatened or endangered species. The dedicated funding in H.R. 4647 would make more than \$63 million per year available to Texas agencies, conservation groups, land trusts, researchers, businesses, and private landowners to help make that a reality.

“We applaud the senators for introducing S. 3223,” concluded Bezanson, “and urge them to add the dedicated funding of the House bill to affect real change for fish and wildlife in Texas and nationwide.”

The Texas Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife was formed to give Texans a voice for wildlife. Every citizen can [help](#), by urging their U.S. Representative to co-sponsor H.R. 4647.

Texas Alliance for America’s Fish & Wildlife is a coalition of more than a hundred organizations that represent more than a million Texans dedicated to speaking with one voice in support of wildlife conservation in the state of Texas. The Texas Alliance works cooperatively with the national Alliance for America’s Fish & Wildlife and many other groups to support conservation funding throughout the United States.

You can learn more about the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act and the Texas Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife by visiting www.txwildlifealliance.org. Photos for media use can be found [here](#).