

H.R. 65 Organizational Sign On

Dear Members of Congress,

X organizations have signed below to stand united against H.R. 65 - Armed Forces Endangered Species Exemption Act, a harmful bill that undermines the foundational principles of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Passed in 1973, the ESA is one of the foundational laws in the United States designed to protect endangered and threatened species, as well as their critical habitats. The ESA also ensures interagency cooperation by requiring federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ensure that their work does not jeopardize the survival of endangered species or destroy critical habitat.

If passed, H.R. 65 will exempt defense activities from the ESA. It will prohibit the FWS and NMFS from designating military or state National Guard installations as critical habitats under the ESA. Additionally, it will prevent these agencies from designating other areas as critical habitats if the Department of Defense (DOD) determines that the land is needed for military purposes, like training or weapons testing. Under [Section 7\(a\)\(2\)](#) of the ESA, any federal agency, including the DOD, is required to assess the potential impact of its actions on endangered species and take steps to mitigate harm. This ensures that species listed under the ESA are not subjected to unnecessary harm during federal activities, including military testing and training. It will not be required for DOD to consult with FWS regarding the impacts of military activities on endangered species and their habitats if this bill is passed. The bill also exempts military personnel, including Armed Forces members and DOD contractors, from ESA restrictions during national defense-related operations. These exemptions include activities that result in harming, killing, or disturbing endangered species and their habitats, as well as the unintentional injury or death of these species during defense operations.



The proposed exemptions in H.R. 65 would weaken the ESA by prioritizing military readiness over the conservation of endangered species and their critical habitat. Bypassing mandated consultations and potential mitigation measures could allow preventable military activities, including the use of sonar, explosives, and other weaponry, to have harmful effects on species that are already facing extinction.

Historically, military training exercises have been considered to be a substantial threat to marine mammals, even suspected of leading to mass stranding events. Following a mass stranding event in the [Bahamas in the 2000s after a military exercise](#), the U.S. government acknowledged sonar as a potential contributing factor. Other stressors from in-air and in-water explosions, electromagnetic devices, interactions with vessels, military expended materials, and seafloor devices, can have devastating impacts to marine mammals. Entanglement and ingestion risks from military expended materials, cables, and debris, as well as secondary stressors related to habitat and prey availability, can further disrupt ecosystems, affecting entire marine mammal populations and their behavior.

Critically endangered species, like the Rice's whale and North Atlantic right whale, have designated or proposed critical habitat that has overlapped with military testing and training sites. Like other species, these critically endangered whales do not recognize the confines of a map, but under H.R. 65, these animals will be subjected to additional anthropogenic threats within their own environment. If passed, this bill could set a dangerous precedent for other sectors to seek similar exemptions, potentially undermining the overall effectiveness of the ESA in protecting biodiversity.

The ESA is a cornerstone of conservation efforts in the U.S., and allowing an exemption for military activities could send a message that economic or defense-related interests are more important than safeguarding biodiversity, ultimately weakening the law's ability to protect species that are facing the threat of extinction. We ask that you defend the integrity of the ESA and the species that rely on it by opposing H.R. 65.



Sincerely,
Turtle Island Restoration Network

adriantreves@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



 Not shared

*** Indicates required question**

Name *

Your answer

Email *

Your answer

Title *

Your answer

Organization Name *

Your answer



Are you authorized to sign on behalf of your organization? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Submit

Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#).

Does this form look suspicious? [Report](#)

Google Forms



