

Two Dozen Riders Attacking Wildlife, Endangered Species, and At-Risk Habitats in House Spending Bills Must be Removed

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House Appropriations Republicans have loaded up their draft annual spending bills with at least two dozen poison pill policy riders that attack wildlife, endangered species, and at-risk habitats. The Clean Budget Coalition, which is tracking the poison pills added to federal spending bills, has repeatedly called on Congress to remove all of these harmful measures.

"The American people expect that wildlife conservation will be based on science, not politics," said Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition. "Decisions on how wildlife are protected should be made by biologists rather than politicians in Congress."

"MAGA Republican leadership in the House has reached a new low in their Interior appropriations bill, which slashes protections for our clean air, water, and critically endangered species," said Kaila Hood, government affairs advocate for the League of Conservation Voters. "The House Interior spending bill contains dozens of provisions that attack at-risk wildlife and habitats, including iconic species like bison, grizzly bears, and gray wolves. These harmful provisions are part of a larger wish-list from extractive industries and developers, which come at the expense of wildlife, our environment, and our collective health. We must ensure that these poison pill riders are not included in any final spending bills— now or in the future."

"We need policies that meaningfully address the joint biodiversity and climate crises and the grave threats they present to wildlife and people," said Mary Beth Beetham, legislative director for Defenders of Wildlife. "Politicians who attack the Endangered Species Act and override science-based conservation policies are ignoring catastrophes that grow worse by the day and will be poorly remembered by future generations paying for these harmful riders."

The riders attacking wildlife include:

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

- The Climate Fisheries Rider would block funds for climate change fisheries research, which would harm fisheries management, ecosystems, and fishermen.
- The Vessel Strike Reduction Rule Rider would prevent the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from finalizing its proposed North Atlantic right whale vessel strike reduction rule until a “near real-time monitoring and mitigation program” to track threatened or endangered whales has been deployed. This would slow down an urgently needed rule to protect the survival of this species.
- The Forest Protection Rider would block funds for implementation of Executive Order 14072, which protects forests in federal regulatory decision making.

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

- The Waters of the U.S. Rider would block the January 2023 revised definition of “Waters of the United States.”

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

- The Waters of the U.S. Rider would prevent the Waters of the United States rule from taking effect.
- The Boundary Waters Mining Rider would overturn the Biden administration’s recently finalized withdrawal of around 225,000 acres of National Forest System lands in northeastern Minnesota, opening the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to toxic mine pollution.
- The Boundary Waters Hardrock Lease Rider would require the Secretary of the Interior to reinstate two canceled hardrock mineral leases in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.
- The Ancillary Use Mining Rider would give mining claimants the right to permanently occupy federal public lands, construct massive toxic waste dumps, and build roads and pipelines across those lands – an unprecedented giveaway of America’s cherished public lands to mining corporations, reversing over one hundred years of legal precedent.
- The Caldwell Canyon Mining Rider would require the Secretary of the Interior to issue a new Record of Decision for Caldwell Canyon Mine project, imposing arbitrary timelines to shortcut compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations. The Caldwell Canyon phosphorus-phosphate mine would be built on irreplaceable habitat, leading to decades of additional water pollution.
- The Expanded Sage Grouse Rider would expand the ban on protecting the sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act – a legacy rider – to include the separate population of bi-state sage grouse.
- The Bison Rider would prohibit funds to allow the introduction of bison into the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana.
- The Endangered Species Consultation Rider would codify climate denialism into law by exempting the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management from updating their land management plans when new information – often new knowledge about the increasingly severe impacts of climate change – shows that endangered species are being harmed or killed on public lands.

- The Lesser Prairie Chicken Rider would prohibit the Interior Department from implementing or enforcing a rule that protects the Lesser Prairie Chicken under the Endangered Species Act.
- The Grizzly Bear Habitat Rider would block funds for the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Ecosystem Restoration Plan.
- The Northern Long-Eared Bat Rider would prohibit the Interior Department from implementing or enforcing a final rule that protects the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act.
- The Gray Wolf Rider would direct the Secretary of the Interior to reissue a rule prematurely removing endangered species protections for the Gray Wolf.
- The Grand Staircase-Escalante Rider would prohibit funds for management of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah except in compliance with the Record of Decision and the February 2020 Resource Management Plan.
- The Glacier National Park Reservation Rider would prohibit the park from implementing a reservation system to address overcrowding.
- The Bison Rider would prohibit the U.S. Department of the Interior from establishing a working group to help restore bison populations.
- The Lead Ammunition and Tackle Rider would prevent agencies charged with wildlife protection from banning toxic lead in ammunition and fishing tackle on federal lands unless an impossible set of criteria are met.
- The Dunes Sagebrush Lizard Rider would prohibit listing the animal under the Endangered Species Act.
- The Rat Poison Rider would block the EPA from restricting rodenticides that pose health risks to humans and other mammals and birds.
- The Conservation Land Use Rider would prohibit the U.S. Bureau of Land Management from implementing the Conservation and Landscape Health rule, which allows the agency to better prioritize conservation of public lands.
- The Grizzly Bear Rider would delist the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of Grizzly Bears under the Endangered Species Act.

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