

Endangered species rewrite approved

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A U.S. House of Representatives bill would make it harder for federal officials to set aside swaths of habitat for endangered plants and animals.

The Resources Committee approved legislation Thursday that would require the federal government to compensate landowners if it declared part of their property off-limits to development to protect federally listed species, reported The Washington Post Friday. The government would have 180 days to decide such cases.

"The whole underlying premise of what we're trying to do is recover species -- individual property owners are not forced to shoulder the financial burden of conserving endangered species for all Americans," said Chairman Richard W. Pombo, R-Calif.

Real estate developers and property owners called the bill long overdue, but environmentalists said the bill destroys critical protections.

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