

Conservationists urge 'tighter wildlife laws' after Trump move

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More than 40% of amphibian species worldwide are in danger of extinction, including the Lehmann's poison frog

Countries should be strengthening their laws protecting endangered species, not weakening them, international conservationists said

Tuesday, after US President Donald Trump's administration announced plans to alter the country's Endangered Species Act.

Amid growing global alarm over the accelerating pace of [species extinction](#), leading figures from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) called for stronger protections of animals and plants under threat.

"Parties are all encouraged to strengthen their wildlife laws. We need more tight wildlife laws, not to weaken them," Juan Carlos Vasquez, head of legal affairs and compliance regulatory services at CITES, told reporters in Geneva.

His comment came after the Trump administration on Monday announced changes to the Endangered Species Act, which critics warned could dramatically weaken the legislation credited with saving the [grey wolf](#), bald eagle and grizzly bear.

Neither Vasquez nor CITES Secretary General Ivonne Higuero wanted to comment on the specific impact of the changes, saying they had yet to see the details and that any analysis was "premature".

CITES, which regulates [international trade](#) in over 35,000 species of plants and animals, has a compliance mechanism that allows it to push through sanctions on countries that fail to follow the rules.

Higuero stressed that the announced US changes may not fall under the CITES convention, which only covers [endangered species](#) subjected to international [trade](#), or listed as so threatened that trade is banned or very closely controlled.

If the changes do impact any of the species on the most-endangered lists, "of course the convention would have to take some steps," she told

reporters.

She said there was currently widespread concern "about what is happening with the extinction of species", following a UN report in May indicating that one million species are rapidly being pushed to the brink of extinction.

She was speaking ahead of a meeting of the 183 parties to CITES, scheduled to kick off in Geneva on Saturday.

The dangers of illegal trade and the plight of Africa's rhino, elephants and giraffes were among a long line of issues to be discussed.

Governments have submitted 56 new proposals to change the levels of protection that the convention provides for various [species](#) of wild animals and plants.

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