

Bill limits Fed power to protect species

20 September 2005

The chairman of the House Resources Committee has introduced a bill in Washington to limit federal powers to protect endangered species.

The Bush administration amendment to the Endangered Species Act would make it more difficult for the federal government to set aside land it deems crucial to the health of endangered species.

The measure -- quickly opposed by groups such as Environmental Defense, Defenders of Wildlife and the Natural Resources Defense Council -- was introduced Monday by House Resources Committee Chairman Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Calif. It is expected to be brought before the full House next week, The New York Times reported.

The Endangered Species Act is seen by opponents as costly and onerous, while the law is credited by supporters with preventing the extinction of hundreds of species of insects, plants and animals during the past 25 years.

Pombo's tried to rewrite the law in the mid 1990's, but failed. Since becoming chairman of the committee, he had made that goal a priority, the Times said.

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APA citation: Bill limits Fed power to protect species (2005, September 20) retrieved 23 June 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-09-bill-limits-fed-power-species.html>

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