

The Ecological Society of America

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The Honorable _____
Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear _____:

The Ecological Society of America is a non-profit, scientific organization with over 7,000 professional members and represents one of the largest sources of information on biological diversity and other ecological topics. We would like to take this opportunity to address the value of the National Biological Service (NBS) to the scientific community and to the public at large.

The diversity of life on Earth constitutes both a unique heritage from the past and a unique resource for the future. Despite widespread acknowledgement that the quality of life of future generations of humans depends critically on the conservation of biological diversity, this resource continues to be threatened by unsustainable human activities. The NBS is an important and necessary step toward meeting our national goal of understanding the nation's biological resources so that they can be more wisely conserved.

We wish to underscore that although there has been much concern linking the NBS with private property rights and the Endangered Species Act, the NBS is not a collection agency but rather a research-based analysis agency designed to increase our scientific knowledge base. Enhanced coordination of biological research within the Department of the Interior is crucial to ensure that the policies it implements are based on sound science. By increasing our scientific knowledge base, the NBS helps ensure that we make wise management decisions.

NBS strives to do exactly what many in Congress are calling for: streamline and reduce waste. NBS serves to eliminate duplicative efforts by incorporating all DOI research into one agency. Abolishing NBS would disengage this coordinated effort and could lead to policy decisions based on incomplete science.

It is our hope that the Subcommittee will invest in our country's ecological health by supporting the NBS and its mission to gain the knowledge we need to make scientifically based management decisions to ensure both the future economic use and ecosystem services of our natural resources.

Sincerely,

Judy Meyer
President