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For Immediate Release

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## House Panel Passes Bipartisan Measure to Improve Endangered Species Act

*Resources Committee approves HR 3824; legislation includes key provisions strengthening science, establishing priorities, protecting private property rights*

WASHINGTON, DC – Bipartisan efforts to strengthen and update the 32-year-old Endangered Species Act (ESA) took a stride forward today as the House Resources Committee approved H.R. 3824, the *Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005 (TESRA)*, legislation co-sponsored by Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR). TESRA calls for common-sense changes to the ESA to improve its overall implementation, which has seen a recovery rate of less than one percent and not been significantly updated since its enactment in 1973.

“I cannot stress how important these changes are to the success of the Endangered Species Act, for the protection of both species and communities,” said Walden. “We have a responsibility to update this law, making changes that will shed light on the process, hold the federal government accountable for its actions and financial expenditures, protect private property rights, encourage a cooperative relationship with states and local governments and, most importantly, ensure that faulty decisions do not lead to disaster for all species—humans included.”

Earlier this week, Walden joined Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA), lead sponsor of HR 3824, and co-sponsor Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) for a national announcement of the bill’s introduction in Sacramento, California. Walden then traveled to Klamath Falls, Oregon, for a regional announcement and rally in support of the legislation. Both Walden and Chairman Pombo have stated that the Klamath Basin is “Ground Zero” in the fight to improve the ESA.

During today’s eight-hour mark up, Walden reiterated the need for peer review of decisions made by the federal government when considering data and science presented for their consideration. He cited the crisis that ensued following the water shut off to Klamath Basin farmers and ranchers in 2001, a decision which the National Academy of Sciences determined as

lacking “substantial scientific support” and of “doubtful utility” when they conducted their independent review.

“We want to make sure that the decisions we are making that affect species and those who live in communities around these species are based on data that can withstand the rigors of the scientific community when peer reviewed,” said Walden to his colleagues on the Committee. “I saw the disaster in the Klamath Basin where 1,200 farm families had their water cut off. It wasn’t until after those decisions had been implemented that we were able to get the independent peer review that is called for in this language [H.R. 3824].”

The final vote in the Committee was 26-12; H.R. 3824 will now proceed to the full House for its consideration. For more information on H.R. 3824, please visit [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov) and select “Strengthening the ESA” on the left-hand menu.

*Walden, 48, has represented the people of Oregon’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District since 1999. He chairs the Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health.*

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