

## **Bush and the ESA - Time to get Congressional Oversight**

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According to [widespread media \(and blog\) reports](#), the Bush administration is about to release a set of administrative rules changes that would "gut" the Endangered Species Act. Actually, "gut" really isn't descriptive enough to do justice to what they are getting geared up for. They are getting set to completely eviscerate the act. Basically, their plan is to take the thing, slit it up the middle, dump all the internal organs onto the ground and jump up and down on them. Then they're going to stuff the carcass of the Endangered Species Act with straw, and drag it around with them in a Weekend-at-Bernie's-esque attempt to maintain some sort of environmental credibility.

Normally, given this administration, we would find out about these changes in a [Friday Trash Day](#) news release right after the rule changes are published. We have advance warning this time because the proposed changes were leaked to several outstanding organizations that have been heavily involved in the ongoing battle against the ongoing Administration War on Science - [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#) (PEER), [the Center for Biological Diversity](#), and [Earthjustice](#). Those organizations have made the leaked documents available on their websites, along with commentary. The proposed changes are chilling.

PEER and [the Center for Biological Diversity](#) joined forces to do some side-by-side comparisons of the current regulations and the proposed changes ([pdf](#)). You should read those, but you should also be aware that the side by side doesn't include all of the changes in the proposal - just the most major ones.

As things currently stand, there is little to prevent the administration from making these changes. They do have the power to do this. They have demonstrated a willingness to disregard scientific advice, public opinion, and common sense on any other number of issues. There is little reason to hope that they will respond to any of those factors in this case.

But there is not no hope.

This is a case that is ripe for Congressional oversight. These changes are a giveaway to any number of industries that have fought the Endangered Species Act for years. Were they involved in the process that has lead to these proposed changes? The proposal comes from the Department of the Interior. Was the White House involved in this one, too?

These are questions that I think should be answered. If you agree (and live in the United States), you should contact your [Representative](#) and [Senators](#) and ask them to get involved.