

Polar Bear Protection Recommendation Misses Deadline

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Anchorage, Alaska (AHN) - A final decision expected to determine the future of the protection of polar bears from global warming effects was delayed by the U.S. government Monday. The scheduled decision involved the option of placing the polar bears under the endangered species category, earning it added governmental protection in the wake of climate change consequences.

The delay was reportedly caused by the amount of work, said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and has nothing to do with any scientific uncertainty.

The deadline set for Wednesday is planned to be pushed back, with a formal recommendation to be sought within 30 days. According to the National Geographic, there was no specific date set as the new deadline.

A decision to add the polar bears to the endangered species list is expected to instigate restrictions in development for the sake of preservation of the animals' habitat.

According to Dale Hall, director of the USFWS, the fact that there has never been an addition of a species to the endangered list due to the threat of global warming further complicates the issue.

"That's why this one has been so taxing and challenging to us," the AP quoted him.

The delay was not met with total complacency, as Andrew Wetzler of the Endangered Species Project at the National Resource Defense Council branded it as "outrageous and unwarranted."

Legal action will reportedly be sought by environmental groups when the Wednesday deadline is passed.

"We certainly hope that the polar bear will be listed within the next month," said Kassie Siegel, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, and the lead author of the petition for the polar bears' inclusion to the endangered list.

"But this is an administration of broken promises," she added, "from Bush's campaign pledge to regulate greenhouse gases to Secretary [Dirk] Kempthorne's failure to list a single species under the Endangered Species Act in the last 607 days."