

Senate lawmakers join bid to delist Yellowstone grizzlies

[Michael Doyle](#), E&E News reporter Published: Monday, March 29, 2021

Western Republican senators have reinforced a congressional effort to remove Endangered Species Act protections from Yellowstone-area grizzly bears.

Echoing an earlier House effort, five GOP lawmakers last Thursday introduced the Senate version of what they call the "Grizzly Bear State Management Act."

The [bill](#) would remove grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the ESA list, shift their management to the states and block judicial review of the move.

"By all scientific measures, the grizzly bears of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are fully recovered," said Sen. Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming. "Reproductive numbers are stable, and the population is at or near its max capacity for the habitat."

Lummis joined Sens. John Barrasso of Wyoming, Mike Crapo and James Risch of Idaho, and Steve Daines of Montana in introducing the bill. Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming has introduced a companion measure in the House ([E&E Daily](#), March 2).

There are about 1,800 grizzly bears in the Lower 48, including roughly 700 in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, which includes parts of northwest Wyoming, southwest Montana and eastern Idaho.

The Fish and Wildlife Service in 2007 deemed the Greater Yellowstone grizzly as a distinct population segment and delisted it. Following a legal challenge, FWS in 2017 again delisted the Yellowstone population after concluding its numbers had rebounded.

In 2018, Montana-based U.S. District Judge Dana Christensen ruled that FWS had exceeded its authority and had failed to consider how reduced protections in the Yellowstone region would affect other grizzly populations.

"It's disturbing to see Western lawmakers try to blatantly sidestep the science showing that grizzly bears should remain federal protected under the Endangered Species Act," Andrea Zaccardi, a senior attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, said yesterday. "We're hopeful this bill dies a quick death in Congress."

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