



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:
press@oag.state.md.us
410-576-7009

Attorney General Brown Co-Leads Coalition of 15 State Attorneys General Supporting Federal Efforts to Restore the Endangered Species Act and Urging the Biden Administration to Go Further in Unwinding Trump Rules

BALTIMORE, MD (August 23, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown joined Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell and California Attorney General Rob Bonta in leading a coalition of 15 attorneys general supporting proposed rules that would strengthen protections for federally threatened and endangered species while urging the Biden Administration go even further in unwinding harmful changes made to the same regulations by the Trump Administration.

“Maryland is home to a number of threatened and endangered species, but most of these species reside in other states as well. We are therefore reliant on federal efforts to protect them,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “While the proposed rules would undo several of the most damaging anti-wildlife modifications, pushed through by the previous Administration, I urge the Biden Administration to go further and reverse all of the harmful changes adopted under the previous Administration.”

The Endangered Species Act was enacted in 1973 with strong bipartisan support and the clear goal of preventing extinction by promoting species recovery. In 2019, the Trump Administration finalized a suite of regulatory changes that undermined the Act’s effective implementation and threatened conservation of both species and their habitats. Maryland, Massachusetts, and California co-led a group of states challenging those rules in federal court, but the rules were eventually remanded without vacatur meaning the Trump Administration’s regulations remain in effect.

The Biden Administration is now proposing to undo several of the most egregious changes made by the Trump Administration. Among other things, the proposal would restore language requiring that species listing and delisting decisions must be made without reference to economic factors that was removed by the Trump Administration in 2019; restore a default prohibition on “taking” threatened species, which the Trump Administration removed despite almost four

decades of proven effectiveness; and undo several changes that made it more difficult to protect species from the threats posed by climate change.

The states support these changes but urge the Biden Administration rescind other aspects of the Trump Rules as well. These include modifications that allowed for the piecemeal destruction of critical habitat and several regulations that marginalized the role of expert wildlife agencies in reviewing the impacts of federal activities on listed species.

In addition to Maryland, Massachusetts, and California, the comments are joined by the attorneys general of Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

A copy of the comments can be found by visiting:

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/news%20documents/082323EndangeredSpeciesRegs.pdf>

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/082323a.pdf>