

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0301

December 4, 2015

The Honorable Daniel Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
1849 C Street NW
Room 3331
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Ashe,

We write to you in regards to the proposed rule for the headwater chub and a distinct population segment (DPS) of the roundtail chub published in the Federal Register (80 FR 60753) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) on October 7, 2015. We believe that the current comment period is much too short and request an additional 60-day extension of the public comment period. Also, we firmly believe it is imperative that the FWS hold multiple public hearings in areas that will be impacted by this new mandate.

Listing the headwater chub (*Gila nigra*) and a DPS of the roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) would be detrimental to both Arizona and New Mexico. The financial impact of such a listing is still uncertain but the potential for significant negative consequences is real and something that we believe is unnecessary and frankly, unwarranted.

While we would like to take this opportunity to discourage the FWS from pursuing this rule and to ask for it to be withdrawn, at the very least the current window for public review is far too brief for real assessment and input from local stakeholders. Those individuals who will be most impacted by this listing need at least 60 more days for review and comments so that everyone has sufficient time to understand and provide meaningful feedback on both the proposed rule and the 120-page species status assessment.

Further, while FWS had stated it was open to public hearing request on the proposed rule – including that it would provide details on the dates, times, and locations of such hearings “at least 15 days prior to the hearing” – there have been no public hearings announced on the rule to date. How can we truly assess local opinion on this matter when the public has not been presented with an adequate amount of time or an appropriate venue to voice their concerns or ask their questions? Furthermore, we are troubled that your agency failed to schedule any public hearings during the initial public comment period.

We request that the FWS schedule and publish the dates, times and locations of multiple public hearings, specifically in Arizona and New Mexico. We think you would agree that providing transparent and open lines of communication to solicit public comment are of the utmost importance as we move forward. Furthermore, we would like to reiterate our request for a 60-day extension of the public comment period.

We appreciate your attention and consideration on this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon. As always, we ask that this matter be handled in strict accordance with agency rules, regulations, and guidelines.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress