



NATIONAL STONE, SAND  
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

May 16, 2023

The Honorable Markwanye Mullin  
United States Senator  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress  
Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Mullin and Congressman Stauber,

On behalf of the 450 members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), we write to urge you to vote to reverse the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) designation of the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), on S.J. Res 24 and H.J. Res. 49. Rather than safeguarding the species against vital population factors, the current classification through rewritten regulations on critical habitat hinders the development of nationwide infrastructure through burdensome, bureaucratic red tape and inhibits the sustainability, growth and longevity of the NLEB population.

NSSGA serves as the voice of the aggregates industry in the United States, which includes more than 9,000 facilities and over 100,000 employees in lucrative positions. This industry annually sources 2.5 billion tons of aggregates, crucial for sustaining our contemporary lifestyle and building the nation's infrastructure and communities. As the primary link in the building supply chain, the aggregates sourced by the industry form fundamental building blocks required to construct roads, airports, transit, rail, ports, clean water and energy networks.

NSSGA and its members strongly endorse the efforts of both the legislative and administrative bodies to modernize the Endangered Species Act with a primary focus on species recovery, promoting voluntary initiatives and maintaining a balance among the interests of landowners, local governments and other stakeholders. There are over 9,000 aggregates operations in the U.S., many of which are located in the NLEB habitat area. Our members work hard to prioritize the maintenance and preservation of a broad range of habitats for an array of species. Rather than continuing to restrict forest management in the NLEB habitat range and inhibiting population recovery, our members hope to see the FWS' endangered designation reversed and find ways to promote standardized and transparent scientific decisions and increase consultation with local communities and stakeholders, who play a key role in protecting local wildlife.



The primary threat to this species is a pathogen with no known treatment. There is limited evidence that restricting forest management in the bats' range will contribute to its recovery. FWS has said the deadly disease known as "White Nose Syndrome" has caused an estimated population decline of 97–100 percent across 79 percent of the species' range. The fungus which causes White Nose Syndrome, known as *Pseudogymnoascus Destructans*, invades and infects skin of the muzzle, ears and wings of hibernating NLEBs. Labeling the NLEB as "Endangered" will not stop the spread of the invasive fungus and will hinder any opportunity for habitat control and conservation. This merely grants opponents to stop vital economic development projects in the eastern half of the of the United States. To facilitate construction, permit energy transmission, extract resources essential for everyday life and appropriately administer our forests, we require practical habitat conservation plans that safeguard wildlife without jeopardizing our economy.

We strongly urge you to vote to reverse the FWS endangered classification of the NLEB across its 37-state range. We hope to see FWS carefully consider creative and practical strategies that protect the NLEB species while minimizing regulatory restrictions on the public, as the current classification hinders growth of both the NLEB population and the U.S. economy.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Johnson  
President & CEO  
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

