

SB-49 Loses Steam

SB-49 is a bill in the California legislature that would provide protection in California for endangered species whose protections will likely be stripped away by the Republican Majority in Congress and President Trump. Several GOP congressmen have already stated their intentions to gut the Endangered Species Act and have already introduced several bills to do so.

SB-49 would have added to California's Endangered Species act any species dropped from the federal Endangered Species Act and strengthened California's act to the level of the existing federal law. The bill passed the State Senate last year but never came to a vote in the State Assembly. Instead it was changed into a two-year bill, extending the time available for its passage into 2018.

The bill was authored by Senator, and President Pro Tem, Kevin DeLeon. Repeated requests to DeLeon's office, by phone and email, to determine the status of the bill this year were ignored. We finally heard from our local Assembly member that DeLeon was no longer "moving" the bill, meaning he had basically abandoned it. Apparently DeLeon, who has entered the primary race for Diane Feinstein's U.S. Senate seat, has acquired a new and different set of priorities that don't include pushing for passage of SB-49.

We are saddened by the loss of this bill and fearful of what the future may bring. As Aldo Leopold once said, "To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering". What happens when all the parts are thrown away? Will the next generation be able to save our planet before it's too late?