



November xx, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is submitted in support of the petition by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) to list 42 species of freshwater snails under the United States Endangered Species Act. Given the restricted ranges, specific habitat requirements, and eminent threats to the very survival of these snails, we believe that listing action is warranted under the US Endangered Species Act. Our organization, the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS), is a non-profit entity whose mission includes education, research, and protection of freshwater mollusks, North America's most imperiled group of animals. Our membership includes individuals affiliated with state and federal government, academia, as well as amateur collectors and citizen scientists.

The current count of known freshwater snail extinctions in the United States stands at 42; within the hydrobiid family, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the fauna is considered to be at-risk, a staggering total. Much of this high degree of imperilment stems from endemic western United States springsnail species. In the case of the hydrobiid springsnails being petitioned by CBD, all of the species are restricted to a single system or a small number of spring systems; without protection of their groundwater habitats, these species are at critical risk of extinction. The groundwater resources that are being targeted for pumping are largely to support the explosive growth of the Las Vegas metro area. Not only do these projects jeopardize the very existence of these springsnails but also threaten regional wetlands and isolated groundwater-dependent waterbodies. Additionally, several of these species will require action to reduce habitat disturbance and degradation due to existing intensive recreation impacts.

The FMCS requests that you give strong consideration to the CDB petition and act to list the species in the package. Without the intervention of the US Department of the Interior on this issue, we will likely stand witness to more species' extinctions due to the lack of adequate consideration for our nation's biodiversity.

Thank you for all considerations.

Sincerely,

Steven Ahlstedt, President

Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

Cc: Members of the FMCS