

February 14, 2018

Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Democrat
House Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, shooters, and outdoor enthusiasts that our organizations represent, we write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647), sponsored by Representatives Jeff Fortenberry and Debbie Dingell.

We believe that collaborative conservation is the most effective way to recover wildlife populations—an approach embodied in H.R. 4647. Time and time again, proactive, collaborative, and voluntary conservation efforts have allowed our nation to recover wildlife species, from deer and elk to wild turkeys and a range of waterfowl and fish, through habitat restoration projects and other strategies. These collaborative efforts have largely been funded by our members and sportsmen and women across America, who pay license fees and the excise taxes collected under Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson.

While collaborative conservation has spurred countless on-the-ground successes, today more than 12,000 wildlife species across our nation are considered “species of greatest conservation need,” as identified by State Fish and Wildlife Agencies. A Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, comprised of industry and conservation leaders, was empaneled with the express purpose of developing recommendations to solve this challenge. They recommended—and we agree—that the best way to recover these species of concern is to build upon the conservation model that has produced the remarkable successes for game species by investing a portion of existing energy revenues in proactive, collaborative, voluntary efforts at the state-level through the existing Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, as proposed in H.R. 4647. This non-regulatory, collaborative approach is a superior means of recovering species and leverages additional funds through innovative public/private partnerships, while reducing the need for more expensive “emergency room” measures and avoiding tens of billions of dollars in economic uncertainty from potential regulation and litigation.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will drive measurable conservation outcomes by providing the resources necessary to implement Congressionally-required State Wildlife Action Plans through which each state and territory develops a clear state-level strategy with local stakeholders for how best to recover species of greatest conservation need in their state.

Further, and in addition to other conservation and recreation programs, H.R. 4647 will strengthen local communities and the national economy by both bolstering the outdoor recreation industry, which generates more than \$887 billion in annual economic benefit, supports 7.1 million jobs, and attracts more than 140 million participants (including nearly 40 million hunters and anglers), while creating more regulatory certainty for numerous industries. More specifically, funds from H.R. 4647 will be used to enhance wildlife-associated recreation.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is good for conservation, good for sportsmen, good for the economy, and good for taxpayers. We encourage your strong support and look forward to working with you to move this bill through the legislative process.

Thank you for your commitment to conservation.

American Woodcock Society
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club
Camp Fire Club of America
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Texas Wildlife Association
The Conservation Fund
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi