



July 23, 2018

Dear Members of the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee:

As Chairman of the Steering Committee for the National Wild Pig Task Force, I am writing to express our support for the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program in the Conservation Title of the 2018 Farm Bill.

The National Wild Pig Task Force is a technical, scientific, and leadership alliance of federal, tribal, provincial, state and private conservation partners and feral swine experts that exists to: provide national leadership and a collective voice for the science-based management of wild pigs; provide a forum for the exchange of information among stakeholder groups; identify knowledge gaps in the biology, ecology, and management of wild pigs; and provide sound science-based information to the public, administrators, and policy makers regarding the management of wild pigs.

Feral swine, which are not native to the Americas, cause significant damage to an array of our natural resources. Additionally, feral swine negatively impact the larger agriculture community, and can be devastating to individual agricultural producers due to their rooting behavior and consumption of valuable crops. Recent research highlights the growing negative impacts feral swine can have to our water, plants, wildlife communities (both game and non-game) and their habitat. The prolific reproductive capabilities of feral swine create an enormous challenge for effectively managing this invasive, exotic species and mitigating their damage. Furthermore, they can serve as a vector for disease to game and non-game animals, livestock, and even humans. A conservative estimate of the annual economic impact caused by feral swine is \$2.5 billion.

The Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program would provide \$100 million mandatory funding to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to establish pilot projects to control and eradicate feral swine as well as mitigate their damages. We strongly support this measure and its potential to provide needed financial assistance to address the growing feral swine problem.

We greatly appreciate Chairman Conaway's commitment to this important issue and hope that the Conference Committee will include this critically important piece of conservation policy within the final Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jim LaCour
Chairman, NWPTF
State Wildlife Veterinarian - Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

NWPTF Steering Committee Members and Subcommittee Chairs:

Steven Backs – Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Dr. James Beasley – University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Frank Boyd – NWPTF Applied Management Subcommittee Chair

Matthew Chopp – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Dr. Stephen Ditchkoff – Auburn University, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

Bee Frederick – Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

Dr. Jim LaCour – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Alan Leary – Missouri Department of Conservation

Dr. Jack Mayer – Savannah River National Laboratory

Dr. Mark Smith – Auburn University, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

Dr. Bronson Strickland – Mississippi State University Extension Service