



August 28, 2018

Dear Members of the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee:

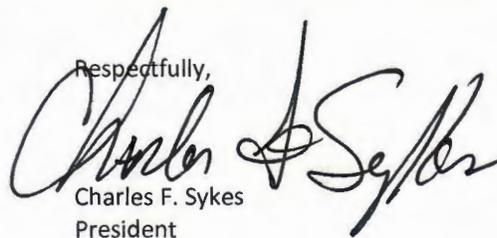
As President of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA), I am writing to communicate the importance of, and our support for including the Feral Swine Eradication and Control (FSEC) Pilot Program in the Conservation Title of the 2018 Farm Bill. The SEAFWA is the professional association that serves as the collective voice of state fish and wildlife agencies that possess the constitutional and/or statutory authority and responsibility for the conservation of fish and wildlife species within their borders, within the southeastern United States. The fifteen SEAFWA member states include: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) – a wild relative of domestic swine – is not native to North America and threatens native wildlife, natural resources, agriculture, private property and public health wherever it occurs. This invasive species reproduces quickly (2 litters each year) and is rapidly expanding its range in the United States. The population size exceeds 6 million and feral hogs now occur in at least 35 states. Feral hogs thrive in the warm climates of the southeastern states where they compete with wildlife for food and prey upon the young and nests of native wildlife. These negative impacts to wildlife can be significant (e.g., sea turtle nest depredation) and often require costly long-term efforts to exclude or control feral hogs in sensitive conservation areas. Also, when wallowing and rooting (digging) for food, they disturb large areas of soil, producing tremendous damage to public conservation lands, agricultural crops and private property. These impacts and related damage management costs add up to approximately \$2.5 billion in damages each year. Feral hogs can be aggressive towards people and may transmit many of the dozens of diseases they carry to wildlife, livestock and people. Accordingly, the SEAFWA strongly supports the FSEC Pilot Program as a relevant conservation measure and contribution to feral hog population control efforts.

The five-year FSEC Pilot Program is proposed to provide \$100 million of feral hog control funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Both agencies have a long and successful history of collaboration with state fish and wildlife agencies to provide feral hog control services to agricultural industry stakeholders, conservation land managers and private property owners. The FSEC Pilot Program will help expand these much-needed efforts.

The SEAFWA acknowledges the conservation and agricultural industry value of the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program and we encourage the Farm Bill Conference Committee to include it within the Conservation Title of the final 2018 Farm Bill.

Respectfully,



Charles F. Sykes  
President

CFS:wm

cc: Virgil Moore, President, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
John Bowers, Chairman, SEAFWA Wildlife Resources Committee  
Curtis Hopkins, Executive Secretary, Southeastern Assoc. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies