

June 7, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Risch
U.S. Senate
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
U.S. Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Crapo
U.S. Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, Senator Risch, Senator Wyden and
Senator Crapo:

Our organizations are writing to you today on behalf of our millions of members who are dedicated to enhancing wildlife conservation on our nation's public and private forest lands and to securing the future of our hunting heritage. We support the discussion draft legislation "Wildfire Budgeting, Response, and Forest Management Act Of 2016", which addresses wildfire suppression funding and forest management enhancements. Good proactive forest management coupled with a fire-fighting funding fix is our shared goal. We urge the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to quickly advance these bipartisan forest management enhancements and a permanent fix to wildfire suppression funding.

Specific to the draft bill, we strongly support the provision at Title III (a)(2)(E) that expedites forest health projects to improve "wildlife habitat to meet management and conservation goals, including State population goals". Federal land forest projects can significantly affect the ability of states to attain or sustain wildlife population goals. The degree of the federal-state coordination can vary, and differing mandates can complicate state fish and wildlife agency efforts to meet publicly supported outcomes for hunting and other wildlife related recreation. This provision should enhance the state-federal cooperation to reach these fish and wildlife population, habitat, hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreation outcomes on federal forests within state borders.

We also support provisions in the discussion draft bill that fix the problem of account transfers (out of important recreation, wildlife and forest project accounts) when wildfire suppression costs exceed the appropriated amounts for the Forest Service and BLM. We respectfully request that you consider adding a continuing ceiling set at last year's wildfire suppression 10-year average, and above which the agencies may access disaster funding, so that the Forest Service's and Department of the Interior 's overall funding outlooks do not see any further allocation of its

budget towards wildfire suppression funding. The percentage of the Forest Service's and Department of the Interior's budgets dedicated towards wildfire suppression has grown substantially in the last several decades. The decline in staff resources and budget authority for other activities has contributed to the challenges of overstocked forests in all parts of the country, which is also reflected in certain types of wildlife habitat decline.

Thank you for your continued leadership. We look forward to working with you to pass meaningful, bipartisan legislation that gets signed into law this year.

Sincerely,

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
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Trappers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Shikar Safari Club International
Tread Lightly!
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi