

March 27, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
522 Hart Senate Office Building

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, recreational shooters and other outdoor enthusiasts that our organizations represent, we are writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of David Bernhardt as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Through his public service experience on Capitol Hill and within the Department of the Interior (DOI), Bernhardt has demonstrated his commitment to conserving and protecting our nation's natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

Bernhardt has a passion for conservation that is guided by his personal commitment to balance the Department's mission. He also has a strong track record of collaborating with diverse cross-sections of stakeholders to ensure that their best interests, not partisan politics, inform policy decisions that may affect them.

An avid sportsman, David has volunteered his time to serve on the Commonwealth of Virginia's Board of Game and Inland Fisheries, Bernhardt understands the value of state and federal partnerships on issues such as ensuring that states retain primary jurisdiction over fish and wildlife within their borders, and interagency collaboration to enhance and expand the public's access to the lands that the public owns.

In 2017, Bernhardt was confirmed by the Senate to serve as a Deputy Secretary of the Interior on a bipartisan vote, and has been serving as Acting Secretary since January 2019. In 2006, Bernhardt was unanimously confirmed by the Senate to serve as the Solicitor of the DOI, where he was the chief legal officer and third ranking official for the Department.

During his time at DOI, during both the current administration and his prior service, Bernhardt was instrumental in several complex wildlife habitat policies:

- Recently issued Secretarial Order 3373 to direct the Bureau of Land Management to consider outdoor recreation value before disposing or exchanging public lands.
- Oversaw the implementation of Secretarial Orders that expand public access and promote fish and wildlife conservation including S.O. 3362 that encourages collaboration between DOI and western state fish and wildlife agencies for the conservation of big-game winter range and migration corridors.
- Through Secretarial Order 3356, Bernhardt worked to expand hunting and fishing opportunities on more than 250,000 acres within the National Wildlife Refuge System, while

working to significantly increase migratory waterfowl populations.

- Worked with Congress and administratively during the Bush Administration to create 15 new National Wildlife Refuges and emphasized recovery goals under the Endangered Species Act.
- Took efforts to conserve the populations of both the bald eagle and the Yellowstone grizzly bear that led to the recovery and removal of the bald eagle from the Endangered Species List; and the proposed delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear population.
- Drafted 10-year plan to implement the Executive Order (E.O. 13443) to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.

We urge you to approve the confirmation of David Bernhardt, so that the Senate may act to quickly confirm the next Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
Boone and Crockett Club
Camp Fire Club of America
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Center for Sportfishing Policy
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
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Charterboat Operators
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Falconers Association
Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever
Pope and Young Club
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quality Deer Management Association
Recreational Fishing Alliance

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Mississippi