

Alabama Wildlife Federation * Archery Trade Association * Arkansas Wildlife Federation * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies * Boone and Crockett Club * Camp Fire Club of America * Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Conservation Federation of Missouri * Conservation Force * Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports * Dallas Safari Club Delta Waterfowl * Ducks Unlimited * Florida Wildlife Federation * Georgia Wildlife Federation Houston Safari Club * Indiana Wildlife Federation * Iowa Wildlife Federation * Izaak Walton League of America * Kansas Wildlife Federation * Louisiana Wildlife Federation * Masters of Foxhounds Association * Michigan United Conservation Clubs * Minnesota Conservation Federation * Mississippi Wildlife Federation * Montana Wildlife Federation * National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative * National Trappers Association * National Wild Turkey Federation * National Wildlife Federation * National Wildlife Refuge Association * Nevada Wildlife Federation * New Mexico Wildlife Federation * North American Grouse Partnership * North Carolina Wildlife Federation * North Dakota Wildlife Federation * Orion - The Hunter's Institute * Pheasants Forever * Quail Forever * Quality Deer Management Association * Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation * Ruffed Grouse Society * Shikar Safari Club International * South Carolina Wildlife Federation * South Dakota Wildlife Federation * Sportsmen's Alliance Tennessee Wildlife Federation * The Conservation Fund * The Wildlife Society * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Whitetails Unlimited * Wildlife Forever * Wild Sheep Foundation * Wildlife Management Institute * Wisconsin Wildlife Federation * Wyoming Wildlife Federation

February 15, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, shooters, and outdoor enthusiasts that our organizations represent, we write to thank you for your commitment to America's sportsmen and women. We especially want to thank you for nominating Representative Ryan Zinke to serve as Secretary of Interior and Governor Sonny Perdue for Secretary of Agriculture, both of whom are sportsmen who understand our nation's conservation heritage.

We write because we believe that there is an opportunity for your Administration to advance three campaign promises simultaneously—creating American jobs, revitalizing rural America, and honoring the conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt—by including strategic investments in America's outdoor economy into the President's infrastructure package.

America's outdoor economy is one of the fastest growing parts of our nation's economy, generating more than \$646 billion in annual economic benefit, supporting 6.1 million jobs, and attracting more than 140 million participants (including nearly 40 million hunters and anglers). This burgeoning sector depends upon healthy and accessible public lands, clean water, clean air, and abundant wildlife populations. Investments in natural infrastructure as part of an

infrastructure package would bolster the outdoor economy, while creating more jobs (15-28 per \$1 million invested) and producing a greater return on investment (\$2-2.62 return per \$1 invested) than other types of investments because most of the investment goes into labor. Investments in natural infrastructure are an opportunity to significantly improve wildlife habitat and water quality while securing dramatic infrastructure investment savings for the taxpayer. Importantly, many of the jobs created would be in rural communities facing high unemployment.

We specifically encourage the Administration to dedicate 5% of the \$1 trillion infrastructure package (\$5 billion/year) toward natural infrastructure and conservation investments that will grow America's outdoor economy, including:

- 1. Recover America's Wildlife:** Much of the outdoor economy is predicated on healthy wildlife populations, yet thousands of wildlife species are at-risk with more than 1,500 listings pending under the Endangered Species Act. Investing in restoration projects at the state-level (through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration program at \$1.3B/year) will drive non-regulatory collaboration to save at-risk wildlife, reduce the need for expensive "emergency room" measures, and avoid tens of billions of dollars in regulatory/ litigation paralysis—all of which create jobs and strengthen America's economy. The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources stands ready to help.
- 2. Advance Bipartisan Sportsman Legislation:** America's sportsmen have been waiting more than six years for bipartisan sportsmen legislation that expands hunting and fishing access and creates jobs by implementing key on-the-ground conservation and natural infrastructure projects through the North American Wetland Conservation Act, National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act, and a modernized Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- 3. Confront Forest Fire Crisis:** Larger and more frequent wildfires are harming local rural economies, affecting millions of acres of wildlife habitat, and consuming more than half of the U.S. Forest Service budget. There are broadly supported bipartisan solutions that will address the fire funding crisis and improve the agency's ability to restore wildlife habitat, increase timber yields, and expand recreational opportunities—all of which create jobs.
- 4. Address Maintenance Backlog:** As Rep. Zinke discussed during his confirmation hearing, there is a significant maintenance backlog for our National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, Bureau of Land Management Lands, and Tribal lands. This backlog is hindering the growth of the outdoor economy, contributing to conflicts with local communities, and preventing millions of outdoor enthusiasts from enjoying public lands and spending money in local economies. Such investments will create tens of thousands of jobs.
- 5. Restore Degraded Habitat:** Restoring degraded wildlife habitat on private lands and large landscapes would spur significant rural job growth, while reconnecting key wildlife migratory corridors and cleaning up contaminated waterways. For example, there is bipartisan support for investing a portion of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund in habitat restoration that could help put people back to work, revitalize communities, and expand hunting and fishing opportunities. Similarly, restoring degraded grasslands and coastal and inland wetlands would increase duck and pheasant populations and hunting opportunities, while strengthening local economies.

In addition to accelerating the growth of America's outdoor economy, we suggest that projects across the entire package be encouraged to enhance wildlife habitat and expand hunter and angler access to lands and waterways. We also recommend that the Administration adopt a simple proposition when considering how best to pay for the infrastructure package: If public resources are taken out of the ground, some of the monetized value should be put back into the ground through investments in conservation and natural infrastructure, as listed above. This principle will ensure that wealth and jobs are not transferred out of rural America and that we are instead "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us," as Theodore Roosevelt envisioned.

Including the investments above in your infrastructure package will create significant jobs and help ensure that you and your administration leave a conservation legacy worthy of President Roosevelt himself. Together, we will show that we can maximize economic growth, while also restoring fish and wildlife populations, expanding access to public lands, ensuring clean air and water, and creating more outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans. Thank you for embracing hunting, fishing and our nation's outdoor heritage.

Sincerely,

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Georgia Wildlife Federation
Houston Safari Club
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Izaak Walton League of America
Kansas Wildlife Federation
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Mississippi Wildlife Federation
Montana Wildlife Federation
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Trappers Association

National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
North Dakota Wildlife Federation
Orion- The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Shikar Safari Club International
South Carolina Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Sportsmen's Alliance
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Wildlife Management Institute
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
Wyoming Wildlife Federation