

January 6, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

RE: Executive Order to Combat Wildlife Trafficking

Dear Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking Co-Chairmen:

Our organizations represent millions of sportsmen and women that actively support wildlife conservation and the protection and enhancement of our hunting and recreational shooting heritage.

We are writing regarding the implementation of President Obama's July 1, 2013 Executive Order Combatting Wildlife Trafficking. We trust the Executive Order brings attention to the serious issues surrounding poaching and creates viable solutions for wildlife management authorities confronting illegal trafficking of wildlife domestically and abroad. We support the Executive Order's recognition that the United States will continue to allow legal and legitimate trade of wildlife. Given the important role you have as the Co-Chairs of the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, we want to ensure you are aware of the unprecedented success of the North American Model and the American System of Conservation Funding in the conservation and management of wildlife in North America. In America, government holds wildlife in trust for the people whom our government serves and whom ultimately are the rightful owners of that wildlife. This public trust doctrine provides a legal foundation and implementation framework for achieving sustainable resource use. Hunters in America are familiar with this Model and its role in conservation and are well positioned to make a global contribution. We ask that you embrace this Model and System in your deliberations. We understand that the public trust doctrine is a concept that already appears in the laws of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Eritrea, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda and has been invoked to protect resources and assert citizens' ownership of resources against impinging private claims.

In the late 1800's, hunters in North America who were committed to the sustainable use of wildlife for personal rather than market purposes, democratic access to our wildlife resources, and a standard of fair chase hunting initiated what is now recognized as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Regulated hunting became the founding influence and remains the foundation of the world's longest-standing movement for wildlife protection, use, and enhancement. Since its emergence, the North American Model has been unprecedentedly successful not only in restoring and safeguarding wildlife populations, but also in developing the highly complex infrastructure that is essential for wildlife conservation and sustainable use.

Around the turn of the last century, America's hunters and anglers pushed for hunting and fishing licenses with those fees dedicated to state-based wildlife management. Almost 80 years ago, hunters supported the Federal Duck Stamp to protect wetlands critical for maintaining waterfowl populations. At the same time, hunters supported a self-imposed, excise tax on firearms and ammunition with those fees directed to the Wildlife Restoration Program for use by state fish and wildlife agencies to professionally manage fish and wildlife and provide public access to conservation lands. Hunters alone have generated \$7.2 billion for wildlife conservation since the Wildlife Restoration Act was passed in 1937. These "user-pays, public-benefits" are the foundation of the American System of Conservation Funding and have allowed the larger public to enjoy the benefits of bountiful fish and wildlife populations and the lands and waters on which they depend. Furthermore, according to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Recreation hunters' sizeable contributions to the U. S. economy include 680,300 jobs, \$11.8 billion in tax revenues and \$86.9 billion in total economic output.

As you consider recommendations to President Obama, we strongly encourage you to recognize that America's hunters are the first line of defense in protecting wildlife from poaching. The role that hunters play exists both in the U.S. and also abroad. Hunters are the true wildlife conservationists and applying the known successes that hunters have achieved in the U.S. to other wildlife related issues will ensure the Task Force makes its decisions on facts. It is our century old personal and financial investment that has led to the success of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Considering that one of the biggest obstacles to combatting poaching is funding for infrastructure, law enforcement, and boots-on-the-ground programs, the example of the American System of Conservation Funding should not be overlooked when considering the global impact hunters have in promoting conservation. As a coalition of professional wildlife biologists, hunters, and lifelong conservationists, our organizations and our

members support exporting the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and its cornerstone, the public trust doctrine to a worldwide audience and we would appreciate the support of your agencies and President Obama's political backing.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club
Campfire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Bear Foundation
Orion-The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Texas Wildlife Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Forever

Cc: Judith McHale, Chair, Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking
Brian Arroyo, Designated Federal Officer, Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking
John Tomke, Chair, Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council
Josh Winchell, Designated Federal Officer, Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council