



March 2, 2022

Governor Tate Reeves  
State of Mississippi  
P.O. Box 24355  
Jackson, MS 39215

**Re: Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund**

**Position: Support**

Dear Governor Reeves,

As a lifelong Mississippian and on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully encourage you to support the establishment of the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund. Investing in conservation benefits Mississippi's fish and wildlife resources and outdoor sporting heritage, and this legislation would enable the state to leverage additional private and federal matching funds for conservation work in the state by allocating a portion of the existing sales tax on sporting goods to dedicated conservation funding.

CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. CSF has a strong track record in Mississippi, working with the Mississippi Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and conservation partners to protect and advance the Magnolia State's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen legislation and state fish and wildlife management objectives.

Establishment of the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund would enable Mississippi to increase the scale of conservation work on private and public lands across the state without creating a new sales tax or increasing the current sales tax rate. Additionally, there would not be an increase in hunting and fishing license fees, and no amendment to the constitution would be required. By allocating a percentage of the existing sales tax on sporting goods to conservation purposes, Mississippians would benefit from projects that improve wildlife habitat; promote hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other forms of outdoor recreation; enhance access to public lands; restore wetlands and other riparian areas important for clean water; and support fish and wildlife conservation on working forests and farms. By dedicating a percentage of the existing sales tax on

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sporting goods to conservation funding, Mississippi would significantly increase its ability to capitalize on matching private conservation dollars as well as federal funds through, among others, the Food Security Act (Farm Bill), Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson), Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson), the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Investing in conservation is important for supporting Mississippi's sportsmen and women, who in 2021 alone, contributed \$32.6 million to conservation funding generated through hunting and fishing licenses and excise taxes on sporting-related goods, the "user-pays, public-benefits" structure known as the American System of Conservation Funding. While hunters and anglers are the primary funders of conservation in the state, we understand the need for and support increased investment in conservation that benefits all Mississippians.

In closing, CSF strongly supports establishing the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund to advance the conservation of Mississippi's lands, waters, and outdoor sporting traditions, and we strongly encourage you to support the legislation. Thank you for considering our comments, and please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



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