

* American Woodcock Society * Boone and Crockett Club * Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Mule Deer Foundation * National Wild Turkey Federation * Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation * Ruffed Grouse Society *

May 10, 2023

Representative GT Thompson, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative David Scott, Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Sportsman Support for Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act (H.R. 1450)

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott:

We write to express our support for the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act, HR1450. The undersigned conservation organizations, representing millions of hunters, natural resource management professionals, and other outdoor recreationalists, thank the sponsors for their bipartisan leadership in crafting the legislation which will provide land managers with expanded tools and the resources to address unhealthy, overstocked forests.

Our federal forests are in poor ecological condition due to a lack of active management, climate change, a century of fire suppression, and decades of controversy about how to best manage forests. While policymakers have fought over federal forest management, forest health has suffered. The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program, by contrast, has allowed the Forest Service to partner with state agencies on federal forest restoration and management projects, facilitating critical work to improve species habitat, enhance watersheds, reduce hazardous fuels, and mitigate wildfire risks.

Since GNA was first authorized by Congress with the 2014 Farm Bill, at least 38 states have broken ground on over 380 GNA projects. Through these GNA projects, states are contributing to the restoration of federal forests on an unprecedented scale. Through HR1450, Tribes and Counties will have the same authority as states to retain GNA project revenues to reinvest in conservation, providing a significant incentive to engage and partner on critical management. The bill also clarifies the ability to carry out restoration services on adjacent state, tribal, county, and other land that is essential to the health and productivity of National Forests.

GNA has worked well, and we urge swift advancement of this bill to further improve the effectiveness of this program.

Sincerely,
American Woodcock Society
Boone and Crockett Club
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society