

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair  
Senate Agriculture Nutrition &  
Forestry Committee

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Nutrition &  
Forestry Committee

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Chair  
House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chair Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chair Thompson, and Ranking Member Scott:

As leaders of the various state Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), we are writing to express our support for robust Conservation and Forestry Titles as the Senate and House Agriculture Committees continue to draft the next Farm Bill. On behalf of both the NASC Network and our respective states' sportsmen and women, we appreciate both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees' dedication to drafting a strong Farm Bill designed to meet the needs of our nation's producers, as well as our nation's sportsmen and sportswomen. Further, we encourage each Committee to maintain existing investments through the Farm Bill's Forestry and Conservation Titles while exploring opportunities to strengthen the Conservation Title's critical voluntary and incentive-based conservation programs.

Through the suite of programs designed to promote active conservation, including practices dedicated specifically to wildlife habitat conservation on private lands, the Farm Bill's Conservation Title represents some of the most important conservation investments in the world. For sportsmen and women, these investments result in significant returns relative to our satisfaction in the outdoors thanks to the role these programs play in support quality habitat for many of the species we pursue. However, we recognize that these benefits are not limited to game species and, thanks to the conservation ethic shared by sportsmen and women, appreciate the role that Conservation Title programs play in supporting healthy ecosystems rich in biodiversity. Whether it be the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or the invaluable conservation compliance programs authorized through the Farm Bill, we encourage each Committee to remain steadfast in their support for conservation.

Similarly, and in recognition of the benefits offered through the Farm Bill in support for both public and private working forests, we join many within the sporting-conservation community in supporting the creation of a Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP) within the Conservation Title as a successor to the Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP). Likewise, we further support the reauthorization of the Forestry Title's Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CLFRP) to ensure that the U.S. Forest

Service retains the opportunity to work with engaged partners to ensure that our nation's public and private forest resources continue to receive necessary management actions.

Finally, and arguably most importantly for sportsmen and women, we support robust investments in the Conservation Title's Voluntary Public Access – Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), such as those introduced in each chamber as part of the bipartisan Voluntary Public Access (VPA) Improvement Act. With a lack of access to quality hunting and fishing opportunities widely cited as a primary reason for lapsed participation, providing quality areas for outdoor recreation has been, and continues to be, a top priority for state fish and wildlife agencies across the country. As the basis for many state agency programs designed to incentivize public access opportunities on private lands, we, as NASC and State Caucus Leaders, applaud investments made through VPA-HIP and joins partners within the sporting-conservation community in supporting substantial increases in the program's funding within the next Farm Bill.

Again, the NASC Network appreciates the Senate and House Agriculture Committees' ongoing support for fish and wildlife conservation through the Farm Bill. Recognizing both the on-site wildlife habitat benefits, as well as the off-the-farm benefits that many of these programs provide for both fish and wildlife populations, we look forward to supporting robust Conservation and Forestry Titles as we continue our work on behalf of America's sportsmen and women and as an active part of the NASC network.

Sincerely,

Representative Danny Crawford, Alabama  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska  
Senator Bill Wielechowski, Alaska  
Senator David Wilson, Alaska  
Representative Mark Perry, Arkansas  
Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Arkansas  
Representative Carlton Wing, Arkansas  
Senator Bill Dodd, California  
Senator Dylan Roberts, Colorado  
Senator Perry Will, Colorado  
Senator Brian Pettyjohn, Delaware  
Senator Nicole Poore, Delaware  
Representative William Carson, Delaware  
Representative Jeff Spiegelman, Delaware  
Senator Jim Boyd, Florida  
Senator Keith Perry, Florida  
Representative David Knight, Georgia  
Representative Larry Walsh, Jr., Illinois  
Senator Jim Tomes, Indiana  
Senator Eric Giddens, Iowa

Representative Will Carpenter, Kansas  
Senator Robin Webb, Kentucky  
Senator Stewart Cathey, Louisiana  
Representative Jerome Zeringue, Louisiana  
Senator Troy Jackson, Maine  
Senator Harold "Trey" Stewart III, Maine  
Representative Scott Landry, Maine  
Representative Steve Wood, Maine  
Senator Jack Bailey, Maryland  
Delegate Kevin Hornberger, Maryland  
Senator Peter Durant, Massachusetts  
Representative David Vieira, Massachusetts  
Senator Jon Bumstead, Michigan  
Representative Sarah Lightner, Michigan  
Representative Amos O'Neal, Michigan  
Representative Rick Hansen, Minnesota  
Representative Leon Lillie, Minnesota  
Senator Juan Barnett, Mississippi  
Representative C. Scott Bounds, Mississippi  
Representative Karl Gibbs, Mississippi

Senator Jason Bean, Missouri  
Representative Tim Taylor, Missouri  
Senator Mike Fox, Montana  
Assemblyman Howard Watts III, Nevada  
Assemblyman Toby Yurek, Nevada  
Senator Lou D'Allesandro, New Hampshire  
Representative Jeff Goley, New Hampshire  
Senator George Muñoz, New Mexico  
Representative Candy Spence Ezzell, New Mexico  
Representative Bill Rehm, New Mexico  
Senator Joseph Griffo, New York  
Assemblyman Robert Smullen, New York  
Senator Steve Jarvis, North Carolina  
Representative Michael Wray, North Carolina  
Representative Corey Mock, North Dakota  
Senator Shane Wilkin, Ohio  
Representative Mike Loychik, Ohio  
Senator Grant Green, Oklahoma  
Senator Blake "Cowboy" Stephens, Oklahoma  
Representative Eddy Dempsey, Oklahoma  
Representative Kevin Wallace, Oklahoma  
Representative Mark Owens, Oregon  
Representative Mike Chippendale, Rhode Island  
Senator Stephen Goldfinch, South Carolina  
Senator Liz Larson, South Dakota  
Senator Herman Otten, South Dakota  
Senator Paul Rose, Tennessee  
Representative Ernest Bailes, Texas  
Senator Terry Williams, Vermont  
Senator Irene Wrenner, Vermont  
Representative Patrick Brennan, Vermont  
Representative Gina Galretti, Vermont  
Representative Mark Higley, Vermont  
Delegate Betsy Carr, Virginia  
Delegate Hyland "Buddy" Fowler Jr., Virginia  
Delegate Mark Dean, West Virginia  
Representative Katrina Shankland, Wisconsin  
Senator Odgen Driskill, Wyoming