



April 25, 2025

Representative Jack McFarland
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
900 North 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Re: HB 564 – Establishing the Louisiana Conservation Incentive Program

Position: Support

Dear Chairman McFarland and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I write to respectfully ask for your support of HB 564. This legislation would establish the Louisiana Conservation Incentive Program and provide an additional conservation funding mechanism that would better enhance wildlife habitat and the management of wildlife species in the "Sportsman's Paradise."

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

The Conservation Incentive Program is a voluntary program that provides incentives to private landowners in exchange for conservation actions on their property. Opportunities to fund projects through this Program would benefit wildlife through forest stand improvement, putting more water on the agricultural landscape to improve suitability for waterfowl and wetland bird species, improving wetlands, prescribed fire implementation, and increased feral hog management efforts.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is widely considered the best wildlife conservation model in the world, and one of the key tenets of this model is that wildlife is held in the public trust. Therefore, wildlife resources are owned by the public and managed by government agencies for the benefit of the public. As Louisiana is nearly 90% privately owned, it is paramount that sound conservation practices are being implemented on privately owned property if the state wants to continue seeing abundant and healthy wildlife populations. Louisiana features an

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abundance of conservation success stories, with the re-establishment of the Louisiana black bear hunting season as its most recent. These populations could not have successfully rebounded without the habitat restoration efforts of private landowners working in concert with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries as well as many non-governmental organizations.

In closing, continuing to invest in conservation is important for supporting Louisiana's sportsmen and women, who already contribute over \$40 million per year to conservation funding through hunting and fishing licenses as well as excise taxes on sporting-related goods – the “user pays – public benefits” structure known as the American System of Conservation Funding. HB 564 would build upon this proud conservation legacy and provide still greater funding to better support Louisiana's cherished wildlife species and their habitats.

Thank you for considering our comments, and we encourage your support of this critical piece of legislation. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Mark Lance
Assistant Manager, Southeastern States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
mlance@congressionalsportsmen.org

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