

July 9, 2015

The Honorable Ron Kind
United States House of Representatives
1502 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Wittman
United States House of Representatives
2454 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kind and Congressman Wittman:

We write in support of your bipartisan legislation, H.R. 2957, which seeks to reauthorize the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA), a very successful program that addresses migratory bird population needs on a continental scale and conserves birds throughout their life cycles

America is blessed with a spectacular abundance and rich diversity of birds, with more than 800 species inhabiting the fifty states and surrounding oceans. Unfortunately, the *U.S. State of the Birds Report* tells us that many of our native bird species are in decline, and some are threatened with extinction.

The NMBCA supports partnership programs to conserve migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean, where approximately five billion birds of over 386 species, including some of the most endangered birds in North America, spend their winters. Projects include activities that benefit bird populations such as habitat restoration, research and monitoring, law enforcement, and outreach and education.

The NMBCA has established a proven track record of reversing habitat loss and advancing conservation strategies for the broad range of Neotropical birds that populate America and the western hemisphere. Since 2002, more than \$50.1 million in grant money has gone out to 47 U.S. states and 36 countries, funding 451 projects, impacting almost 3.7 million acres of critical bird habitat. The public-private partnership, along with the international collaboration it stimulates, are integral to preserving vulnerable bird populations and is vital to achieving conservation goals critical to our environment and economy. Moreover, this federal program is a good value for taxpayers, leveraging over four dollars in partner contributions totaling \$190.6 million for every dollar that the federal government spends.

Migratory birds are not only beautiful and interesting creatures eagerly welcomed by millions of Americans into their backyards every year; they help generate billions of dollars annually to the U.S. economy through wildlife watching activities, and they help our farmers by consuming harmful insect pests from many important commercial food crops and forests. This legislation will help ensure that the broad range of migratory birds, from the Golden-winged Warbler to the Wood Thrush, will have the healthy habitat they need on both ends of their annual migration so they can continue to play their vital biological, recreational, and economic roles.

We urge the House Natural Resources Committee to favorably markup this important legislation, without amendment, and work to ensure its final passage in the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Land Trust Alliance
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
The Nature Conservancy
The Wildlife Society

cc:

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee