

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue
Washington, DC 20250

April 28, 2014

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The undersigned national sportsmen's conservation and natural resource professional organizations write to encourage you to open enrollment for the successful Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as soon as practically possible. CRP enrollment has been closed since the extended 2008 Farm Bill expired in October, 2013. With more than two million acres expiring this year, we believe that reopening CRP should be a top priority – both to retain sensitive enrollments and to provide producers needed and timely enrollment options.

The 2014 Farm Bill, signed by the President earlier this year, includes clear language that establishes Congressional intent that Farm Bill conservation programs, including CRP, be implemented in 2014 while simultaneously developing rules for implementation in 2015. The report language of the legislation also includes Congressional intent that the use of the Continuous CRP (CCRP) program be expanded, and that CRP be enrolled up to the acreage cap. It is our belief that this language, combined with anticipated CRP expirations to occur in October of 2014, necessitates both ongoing CCRP and periodic general signups in the very near future.

Delays in the implementation of the CRP program in fiscal 2014 will mean the continued loss of private land wildlife habitats critically important to local economies. As states continue to grapple with the very real economic impacts of reduced habitat, and as farmers and landowners plan for the future, CRP must remain reliably available as a habitat conservation tool in the most robust way possible. USDA must make full enrollment of CRP an active priority.

On behalf of the millions of Americans who hunt and fish, and the \$200 billion in economic activity they contribute annually, the undersigned organizations would like to encourage USDA to initiate signup opportunities as soon as possible and to maintain the Conservation Reserve Program as a high priority moving forward.

Sincerely,
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
B.A.S.S. LLC
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Delta Waterfowl
Dallas Safari Club
Ducks Unlimited
International Hunter Education Association-USA
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mississippi River Trust
National Rifle Association
National Trappers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pheasants Forever
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Ruffed Grouse Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi
The Wildlife Society

cc: The Honorable Michael T. Scuse, Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign
Agricultural Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture