



American Birding Association ♦ American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association ♦ Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation ♦ Defenders of Wildlife  
Ducks Unlimited ♦ Izaak Walton League of America  
Marine Conservation Institute ♦ National Audubon Society  
National Rifle Association of America ♦ National Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Refuge Association ♦ Safari Club International  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership ♦ The Corps Network  
The Nature Conservancy ♦ The Wilderness Society  
The Wildlife Society ♦ Trout Unlimited ♦ U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance  
Wildlife Forever ♦ Wildlife Management Institute

July 16, 2014

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
509 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cardin:

The organizations of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a broad coalition of 23 diverse wildlife, sporting, conservation, recreational, and professional organizations representing over 16 million Americans, thank you for introducing S.2560, the Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Protection Act and we strongly support the intent of the bill.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not have explicit statutory authority to seek compensation from responsible parties that injure or destroy National Wildlife Refuge System resources. This is in contrast to similar authority used by the National Park Service (Park System Resource Protection Act) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (National Marine Sanctuaries Act). Currently, if Refuge System resources are injured or destroyed, the costs for repair and restoration fall upon the appropriated budget for the impacted refuge, often at the expense of other programs. This can lead to the growth of the operations and maintenance backlog - the reduction of which has been a CARE focus for almost twenty years. Persons responsible for harm to refuge resources -- not taxpayers -- should pay for any injury they cause.

It is our understanding that the legislation aims to be budget neutral, which we support. Any funds collected for resource injuries will be used to rectify that specific injury without the need for Congressional appropriation.

The organizations within CARE have been working in partnership since 1995 to provide adequate funding for the Refuge System. We all agree that the Refuge System is the world's premier system of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife and we are committed to seeing it fully funded. We see this legislation as one way to help fulfill this goal and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to pass the Resource Protection Act.

Refuge Association and  
for Refuge Enhancement