



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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Dear Senator:

The Wildlife Society is writing to respectfully urge you to oppose Coburn Amendment #67 to the Continuing Resolution (HR 933), which would limit attendance of federal employees at meetings and conferences. The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association of over 11,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

The amendment in question would prohibit the attendance of more than 25 employees from a federal department or agency at any single conference occurring within the U.S. This would have a hugely detrimental effect on the professional development of federal personnel, on the flow of scientific information to and from federal departments and agencies, and on the viability of meetings held by professional societies such as ours.

Scientific and professional organizations play many important roles in our society, including sharing information through scientific and popular publications, facilitation of expert networks, providing an independent and science-based perspective on relevant government policies, and professional development and certification programs. The meetings held by these organizations provide venues for members and others to meet face-to-face to network, exchange knowledge and experience, work through problems and solutions, and share the latest scientific information. Most professional societies have annual conferences every year, as do their subunits such as local chapters or subject matter-based working groups. Conferences and meetings offer practical workshops, concurrent sessions featuring the latest research, and numerous social activities that provide opportunities for networking and mentoring. They are a vital way for professional societies to help connect research with on-the-ground management.

Full participation in professional societies is an important part of a scientist's or natural resource manager's career and professional development. Curtailing this involvement is detrimental to the federal agencies that employ scientists, in part because it will prevent the employee from achieving professional stature, thus dissuading the best scientists from entering federal service. It may distance the scientist or natural resource manager from the full interchange of information and ideas that are so vital to keeping current in the field and providing the best scientific or professional advice to the agency.

We urge you to oppose Coburn Amendment #67. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Bies, TWS Director of Government Affairs at 301.897.9770 or laura@wildlife.org.

Sincerely,

Winifred B. Kessler
President