

Senator Ron Wyden, Chairman  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20501

Senator Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20501

April 4, 2013

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Murkowski:

The undersigned organizations represent millions of hunters, anglers, wildlife professionals and other conservationists who have a vital and vested interest in the sustainability of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources for present and future generations. We also believe that domestic energy development of all sources is necessary to secure our energy future, but that this development and transmission needs to be done in ways that are not inconsistent with natural resources conservation or disrupting the balance with our Nation's nearly trillion dollar annual outdoor recreation-based economy. We respectfully urge you to seize the opportunity with this Congress to provide a predictable, dedicated stream of funding to key natural resources conservation programs in conjunction with legislation to address revenue-sharing from energy development and other natural resource-related activities.

Energy and natural resource development and conservation can and should go hand-in-hand. As Congress explores ways to reapportion royalties from these activities on federal lands and waters, we believe that it is an appropriate time to make a lasting commitment of financial resources to the programs that will ensure the future conservation of the nation's natural resources.

As you know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is one of America's most important tools for conserving our national parks, forests, refuges, BLM and other public lands and for creating and enhancing state and local parks, working forests and wildlife areas. This visionary and bipartisan program was created by Congress in 1965 to ensure that a small fraction of federal leasing revenues from energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf is reinvested in American communities. Authorized to receive \$900 million annually in OCS revenues, it has been chronically underfunded for decades. LWCF has received full funding only once and in recent years has declined to approximately one-third of its authorized funding across the nation. We support full and dedicated funding for LWCF, including the dedication of 1.5% to increase access to public lands for hunting, fishing and other wildlife-dependent recreation..

However, LWCF only begins to address our natural resource conservation needs. There are several other meritorious landscape level conservation programs with excellent track records of on the ground conservation successes that adequate and dedicated funding would significantly enhance their utility.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is a voluntary, incentive-based, non-regulatory program that since its inception over 20 years ago has conserved almost 27 million acres of wetlands and associated upland habitats for waterfowl, other wildlife and people. For every federal dollar spent, over three non-federal dollars have been provided by state and NGO partners. Wetlands not only provide wildlife habitat, but also attenuate floods, filter sediment and nutrients from drinking water, and buffer coastal storm surges. We urge full and dedicated funding for NAWCA at \$75M annually.

Another meritorious but significantly underfunded program is the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (SWG). Under this program (in the FWS budget) federal matching dollars are provided to state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve thousands of species identified to be of greatest conservation need in State Wildlife Action Plans. The focus of this program is to keep species from declining to the point where they have to be listed under ESA by addressing the life needs and habitat requirements of the species before precipitous declines compel listing. Conserving species before they need to be listed makes good economic sense, good biological sense, and good common sense. We urge dedicated funding of SWG at \$250M annually.

The philosophy of using energy derived funding to sustain renewable natural resources is a rational and credible nexus because all forms of energy development, from traditional to renewable, have impacts on fish, wildlife, their habitats, and lands and waters. Investments in natural resources science and management are vitally necessary to avoid, minimize or mitigate those energy development and transmission impacts..

We recognize that anticipated incomes from energy development may already be assumed into the budget baseline, and therefore offsets may need to be secured. We urge that you work to design legislation to permanently dedicate funding from energy-derived sources to natural resources conservation as articulated herein, and find the offsets to satisfy the budget rules.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our perspectives.

**American Fly Fishing Trade Association · American Sportfishing Association · Archery Trade Association · Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies · B.A.S.S. · Catch-A-Dream Foundation · Delta Waterfowl · Ducks Unlimited · Mule Deer Foundation · National Trappers Association · National Wild Turkey Federation · North American Bear Foundation · Pheasants Forever · Pope and Young Club · Pure Fishing · Quail Forever · Quality Deer Management Association · Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation · The Conservation Fund · The Wildlife Society · Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership · Wild Sheep Foundation · Wildlife Forever · Wildlife Management Institute**

CC:

Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Senator Baucus, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
Senator Hatch, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee  
Senator Reid, Senate Majority Leader  
Senator McConnell, Senate Minority Leader