

February 13, 2012

Representative John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
1011 Longworth H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Eric Cantor  
House Majority Leader  
303 Cannon Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi  
House Minority Leader  
235 Cannon H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Cantor, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

The undersigned organizations from the recreational fishing, hunting, shooting, and wildlife conservation community would like to bring to your attention our support for H.R. 2834, the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act.

H.R. 2834 is essential to recognizing the importance of and facilitating the expansion and enhancement of recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting on Federal lands. If enacted, H.R. 2834 will help protect these American traditions by establishing them as important public recreational activities on our national forests and public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. H.R. 2834 will also ensure sound scientific management practices for wildlife and their respective habitats.

H.R. 2834 would establish an “open unless closed” policy for hunting, fishing and shooting with certain exceptions such as for national security, public safety, or resource conservation. Otherwise, if closures or restrictions are appropriate or necessary, the public must receive advanced notification and the decision must be based on sound science. H.R. 2834 requires that these traditional recreational activities be addressed in land management plans in order to protect public access and to encourage proactive management.

The recreational hunting, fishing and shooting communities are the foremost financial supporters of sound fish and wildlife management and conservation in the United States. The American System of Conservation Funding relies on the user-pay-public-benefit system and consequently on participation in these activities to generate funding for state conservation agencies across the country. Lack of access to recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting areas is cited as one of the top reasons that people choose not to participate in their sport. It is imperative to conservation efforts that this funding source be continued, so as to promote recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting on Federal public lands.

H.R. 2834 resolves similar problems today as Congress did with passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, which was enacted by Congress in order to recognize the importance of wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting and fishing, on refuge lands. The bill also eliminates duplicative and costly environmental analyses of hunt programs on refuge lands. H.R. 2834 ensures that lands with designations such as “wilderness” and “primitive” are considered open to all legal forms of recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting unless there are legitimate reasons to close these lands. In addition, H.R. 2834 affirms the original purpose of the Wilderness Act of 1964 which states that the Act is to be “supplemental” to and not a hindrance in facilitating the original or primary purpose(s) for which the Federal land was established.

The enactment of H.R. 2834 is essential to the future of recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting on Federal lands and waters. We urge you to support H.R. 2834. With your support, we can help overcome the obstacles facing sportsmen and women today and further the sportsmen tradition so that it can be handed down for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to enact H.R. 2834.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association  
Archery Trade Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Catch-A-Dream Foundation  
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation  
Conservation Force  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Ducks Unlimited  
Masters of Foxhounds Association  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association

Orion – The Hunter’s Institute  
Pope and Young Club  
Public Lands Foundation  
Pure Fishing  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Texas Wildlife Association  
The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation  
Partnership  
Tread Lightly!  
U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance  
Whitetails Unlimited  
Wildlife Forever  
Wildlife Management Institute