

American Fisheries Society * American Fly Fishing Tackle Association * American Sportfishing Association * Archery Trade Association * Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies * B.A.S.S LLC * Berkley Conservation Institute * Boone & Crockett Club * Catch A Dream Foundation * Conservation Force * Dallas Safari Club * Ducks Unlimited * Houston Safari Club * Izaak Walton League of America * International Game Fish Association * National Wildlife Federation * National Wild Turkey Federation * North American Grouse Partnership * Orion the Hunter's Institute * Pheasants Forever * Quail Forever * Quality Deer Management * Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation * Shimano American Corp * The Conservation Fund * The Nature Conservancy * The Wildlife Society * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Trout Unlimited * Whitetails Unlimited * Wild Sheep Foundation * Wildlife Forever * Wildlife Management Institute

April 10, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

We are writing on behalf of 33 of the country's leading conservation and sportsmen's organizations and trade associations to inform you of our strong support for the RESTORE Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) amendment included in the Senate passed Surface Transportation bill. That amendment, which passed with an overwhelming 76 bipartisan votes, directly addresses several of the most urgent conservation, access and funding problems facing American hunters and anglers today. As the Transportation authorization process continues, we strongly urge you to work to ensure that the RESTORE/LWCF amendment passed in the Senate is included in the final legislation. This amendment received 76 votes in part because of the breadth and depth of support from America's 40 million strong hunting and angling community.

The RESTORE Act component of the Senate amendment dedicates 80 percent of Clean Water Act penalties associated with the Deepwater Horizon spill to restoration of Gulf of Mexico resources and economies. This coastal region is treasured by sportsmen throughout America as it supports some of the best hunting and fishing in the world. It hosts millions of ducks and geese during the winter – roughly 70 percent of the waterfowl that use the Central and Mississippi flyways. Roughly one-third of all saltwater recreational fishing trips take place in the Gulf of Mexico. It is critical to this region that these funds are invested in a manner that restores the natural resources and returns fuel to the tank of this multi-billion dollar hunting and fishing economic engine.

Sportsmen have unique firsthand knowledge of, and appreciation for, what LWCF investments can do for rural economies and for sportsmen seeking more and better hunting and fishing opportunities. Not only will the Senate amendment we ask you to support make investments in LWCF consistent with the legislation originally authorizing the fund, it includes language from the "Making Public Lands Public" legislation that currently enjoys strong bipartisan support in the House of Representatives. (H.R. 1997) This language in the amendment will direct 1.5 percent or a minimum of \$10 million annually of the LWCF funds authorized to projects that secure public access to existing federal lands. This will potentially open hundreds of thousands of acres

of currently inaccessible public land to hunting and fishing and very directly address one of the leading causes of declines in hunting and fishing participation.

Together, the RESTORE and LWCF elements of this amendment included in Senate Surface Transportation bill make much needed investments in resources that drive a massive outdoor recreation component of the United States economy. The total contribution from outdoor recreation in the U.S. in 2006, the year for which the most recent statistics are available, is over \$730 billion a year and hunting, fishing and other “human powered” outdoor recreation combine to generate 6.4 million U.S. jobs. This all adds up \$88 billion in federal and state tax revenues. The investment represented in the amendment we ask you to support will make a very meaningful impact on maximizing this contribution to our nation’s economic recovery.

We hope that you will promote conservation and American jobs by actively supporting the retention of this amendment in the final conference report on the Surface Transportation bill. Thank you for your sincere consideration of these significant conservation initiatives.