

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Ducks Unlimited * Izaak Walton League of America * National Rifle Association * Ruffed Grouse Society * Wild Sheep Foundation

September 10, 2010

Dear Senator:

The undersigned non-governmental organizations, representing millions of members across the United States, ask for your help to open and improve access to public lands for recreational purposes, including hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting. We have launched an initiative called "Making Public Lands Public" (MPLP) to address recreational access issues on public lands.

As the Senate considers legislation this fall on energy and the Gulf oil spill, we ask for your support of the non-partisan MPLP provision within the Clean Energy Jobs and Oil Spill Accountability Act. This provision dedicates 1.5% of the annual funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work with volunteering landowners to enhance recreational access to existing public lands. A similar provision was added by amendment on the floor (404-1) to the House-passed H.R. 3534, the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act of 2010 (CLEAR Act).

A very small portion of LWCF is needed to acquire small parcels, easements or rights of way that open access to inaccessible or significantly restricted public lands. The MPLP provision fully complements the first purpose of the LWCF Act which is "to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources."

For the 32 million American hunters, anglers, and recreational shooters, federal public lands are an increasingly important destination. Nearly half of all hunters conduct a portion of their hunting activity on these lands. Lack of access is cited as a primary reason that hunters, anglers, and target shooters stop participating in these traditional activities. Numerous reports verify that access to Federal land is problematic in many places. In fact, a 2004 report to the House Appropriations Committee concluded that more than 35 million acres of BLM and USFS land have inadequate access.

We applaud your efforts to improve outdoor recreation opportunities on our nation's public lands and ask for your support for the MPLP provision. Please feel to contact Jeff Crane, President of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, (202-543-6850; jeff@sportsmenslink.org) if you have any questions.