



CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE COALITION

November 10, 2010

RE: Enhanced Conservation Easement Incentive Essential to Any Year-End Tax Package

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned conservation, agriculture, and sporting organizations, we urge you support including a key conservation provision in any year-end tax legislation.

First passed in 2006, the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations helped America's land trusts boost donations of conservation easements by a third, to more than a million acres a year. It has even greater potential – but that potential can only be realized by making the incentive a permanent part of the tax law.

Landowners can retire the development rights on their land by donating a conservation easement – keeping farm, ranch and forest lands in productive use, protecting important fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving our scenic and historic heritage across America. Under previous law, landowners with modest incomes received little or no tax benefit from donating what may be their family's most valuable asset. By allowing such donors to deduct a larger portion of their income over a longer period of time, this incentive enables thousands of landowners to afford conservation.

This incentive lapsed in 2010, leading to the loss of hundreds of potential donations of development rights on lands with important natural, agricultural and historic values. An on-again, off-again incentive makes it very difficult to educate potential donors, and donating a conservation easement is a lengthy and expensive process that many landowners will not begin without knowing this incentive will be in place at the end.

Bills to make the incentive permanent, S. 812 and H.R. 1831, have 268 House and 41 Senate co-sponsors, including majorities of both parties and all 50 states. We urge you to make accomplishing this goal a priority for the lame duck.

For more detailed information, please contact Russell Shay of the Land Trust Alliance at 202-638-4725 x305 or rshay@lta.org.

Sincerely,

Darin Schroeder, VP of Conservation Advocacy
American Bird Conservancy

Tim Richardson, Director, Government Affairs
American Land Conservancy

Jon Scholl, President
American Farmland Trust

Don Treadway, Executive Vice President
American Quarter Horse Association

Gus Rassam, Executive Director
American Fisheries Society

Gordon Robertson, Vice President
American Sportfishing Association

Rita Neznok, Vice President, Public Affairs
American Forest Foundation

Jay McAninch, President/CEO
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Gary Taylor, Legislative Director
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Jim Martin, Conservation Director
Berkley Conservation Institute

Steve Mealey, Conservation Policy Committee
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Jay McAninch, President/CEO
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance

Gregory C. Avioli, President and CEO
Breeders' Cup Limited

John Aguirre, President
California Association of Winegrape Growers

Len Vallender, Chair
Campfire Club of America

Jimmy Bullock, Treasurer and Life Member,
CADF Board of Directors
Catch-A-Dream Foundation

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Civil War Preservation Trust

Gary Kania, Vice President of Policy
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

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Defenders of Wildlife

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Deb Balliet, CEO
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Eric Holst, Managing Director, Center for
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Scott Kovarovics, Conservation Director
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Rand Wentworth, President
Land Trust Alliance

Dennis Foster, Executive Director
Masters of Foxhounds Association

Rock Ringling, Managing Director
Montana Land Reliance

Karl Anderson, Director of Legislative Affairs
National Association of Conservation Districts

Brian Moore, Legislative Director
National Audubon Society

Kent Bacus, Manager, Legislative Affairs
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Nancy Schamu, Executive Director
National Conference of State Historic
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Lawrence G. Keane, Senior Vice President,
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National Shooting Sports Foundation

Jim Curran, Conservation Director
National Trappers Association

Patrick J. Lally, Director, Congressional Affairs
National Trust for Historic Preservation

James Earl Kennamer, Chief Conservation
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National Wild Turkey Federation

Jim Lyon, Sr. VP for Conservation Policy
National Wildlife Federation

Keith A. Argow, President
National Woodland Owners Association

Ralph Rogers, Executive Director
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Joe Martens, President
Open Space Institute

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Hedrick Belin, President
Potomac Conservancy

Henri Bisson, President
Public Lands Foundation

David Howell, Director, Ag/Wildlife Services
Quail Unlimited

Kip Adams, Director of Education & Outreach,
Northern Region
Quality Deer Management Association

Blake Henning, VP of Lands & Conservation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy
Ruffed Grouse Society

Dr. Larry Rudolph, SCI President
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Brent M. Haglund, President
Sand County Foundation

Mary Tracy, President
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Dan Sakura, VP for Government Relations
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Kathy DeCoster, Vice President and Director of
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Gary J. Wolfe, Executive Director
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Laura M. Bies, Director of Government Affairs
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Thomas M. Franklin, Director of Policy and
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