

March 3, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Paul D Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned conservation organizations representing sportsmen and women, outdoor businesses, natural resource professionals, landowners, and other conservationists, we write to encourage you to maintain the important investments in conservation you accomplished with the passing of the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act. We respectfully request that as you begin the budget and appropriations process you set aside no less than \$32.158 billion for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill; \$5.76 billion for NOAA; and \$851 million for the NRCS.

Since 1977, the percentage of the federal budget devoted to conservation has been cut in half. This trend has negatively impacted the ability of wildlife managers and scientists to conserve the habitat on which many hunters and anglers rely. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has lost 12% of its workforce in just the last five years. The Forest Service has had to cut 39% of its personnel working on land management, timber production, and recreation since 1998. And after adjusting for inflation, the National Marine Fisheries Service is operating on less than it did in 2007.

Thankfully, your work on the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidate Appropriations Act began to reverse this trend. The bill included important increases across the board—12% for the Forest Service, 5% for the Fish and Wildlife Service, 10% for the BLM, and 6% for NOAA. We recognize that the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 essentially held non-defense discretionary spending constant from 2016 to 2017. Therefore we ask that you maintain current funding levels for the agencies and programs that provide the foundation for our \$646-billion outdoor recreation economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
B.A.S.S. LLC
Berkley Conservation Institute
The Burge
Coastal Conservation Association
Costa
Dallas Safari Club

Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Far Bank Enterprises
First Lite
Fishpond
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Trust Alliance
Lopez-Negrete Communications
Mule Deer Foundation
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Wildlife Refuge Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
New South
Orvis
Outdoor Industry Alliance
Outdoor Sportsman Group
Pheasants Forever
Pope & Young Club
Public Land Foundation
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Simms Fishing Products
Sitka Gear
Snook and Gamefish Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
The Wildlife Society
Trout Unlimited
Western Landowners Association
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi
Yamaha Motor Group