

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY · NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION · DEFENDERS
OF WILDLIFE · DELTA WATERFOWL · MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION ·
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION · ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION · ROCKY
MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION · SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT · AMERICAN
BIRD CONSERVANCY · WILDLIFE FOREVER · DALLAS SAFARI CLUB · NATIONAL
WILDLIFE FEDERATION

February 8, 2016.

Oppose Amendments to the Energy Bill that Harm Wildlife Refuges

Dear Senator,

The undersigned scientific and wildlife conservation organizations urge you to oppose any amendments to S. 2012 – the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 – that unduly restrict science-based wildlife and habitat management on our National Wildlife Refuge System.

Tillis Amendment #3227 and Burr Amendment #3175, originally introduced as S. 1204 (The Corolla Wild Horses Protection Act), have been proposed as part of S. Amdt. 2953 to S. 2012, the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015, despite their lack of application to energy policy. These amendments would force the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) into a mandatory agreement to manage for non-native horses on the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. This management agreement would come at the expense of native wildlife and plants, the primary intent of National Wildlife Refuge System lands.

Amendments #3227 and #3175 would override the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act and National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act by changing the purpose for which the refuge was established. If either were to pass, they would require the refuge to manage for a non-native species, potentially setting a negative precedent for other refuges within the System. Non-native species are among the most widespread and serious threats to the integrity of native wildlife populations because of their potential to invade and degrade ecosystems. This change would be made without considering the Currituck NWR's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), which was created with public involvement.

Additionally, these amendments would obstruct science-based wildlife management by specifying a population size of not less than 110 horses. Congressional specification of a species' minimum population size greatly restricts the ability of wildlife professionals to adjust their management strategies in response to environmental and landscape changes in order to protect natural resources.

As supporters of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the native wildlife it works to conserve, we urge you to vote no on Tillis Amendment #3227 and Burr Amendment #3175, which would undermine the efforts of the FWS to manage refuge resources on behalf of the American public. We thank you for considering our concerns and recommendations and we hope you will work to ensure the National Wildlife Refuge System's integrity by voting against these amendments.

Sincerely,

The Wildlife Society
| National Wildlife Refuge Association

Defenders of Wildlife
Delta Waterfowl
Masters of Foxhounds Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Archery Trade Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Society for Range Management
American Bird Conservancy
Wildlife Forever
Dallas Safari Club
National Wildlife Federation