

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

January 12, 2015

Dear Secretary Jewell:

On behalf of millions of sportsmen, conservationists, and natural resource professionals throughout the country, we are writing to note how pleased we are that Congress has passed, and President Obama has signed, H.R. 5069, the Federal Duck Stamp Act. By raising the price of a federal duck stamp from \$15 to \$25, this legislation will raise millions of dollars for the conservation of critical wetland habitat. Since the price of a duck stamp was adjusted 23 years ago, conservation easement costs have greatly increased and conservation buying power of duck stamp revenues has diminished greatly. This legislation will restore that buying power at a time when we are witnessing the loss of hundreds of thousands of acres of the best, most productive waterfowl breeding habitat in North America.

As you contemplate the most efficient ways to invest this new revenue, we hope that you will consider distributing it based on waterfowl habitat conservation needs. The prairie pothole region (PPR), which produces half of the waterfowl in North America, is losing large swaths of habitat each year as its wetlands are drained and its native prairie is put under the plow. A study released in August, 2014, conducted by South Dakota State University (SDSU) reports that between 2006 and 2012, more than 1.8 million acres of grassland were converted to cropland, inundated by water, or lost to urban development. The Department of the Interior recognized this conservation need in 2009 when it established the Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area (DGCA). The main challenge associated with that important conservation initiative is raising and deploying the funding necessary to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers before the majority of the remaining habitat is lost.

Specifically, we hope that you will:

- 1) Maintain the Department's current commitment to the Prairie Pothole Region.
- 2) Allocate as much of the new duck stamp revenues as possible to the conservation of the PPR, so that the Department can expeditiously purchase conservation easements from the large backlog of interested and willing landowners in the region. Moreover, we also hope that the Department will supplement that commitment of duck stamp funds with generous annual allocations of LWCF funding. Only through a major, concerted funding effort can we conserve the majority of remaining PPR waterfowl habitat and ensure the generations of Americans to come will have the opportunity to view, hunt and enjoy. The infrastructure to accomplish this task is already in place at the Federal, State and local NGO level – we just need to properly fund the mission and time is of the essence.

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to working with you to invest these conservation dollars.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Bear Trust International
Boone and Crockett Club
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Campfire Club of America
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Masters of Foxhounds Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion – The Hunter’s Institute
Pheasants Forever
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wildlife Society
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute