



**American Birding Association ♦ American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association ♦ Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation ♦ Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited ♦ Izaak Walton League of America
Marine Conservation Institute ♦ National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association of America ♦ National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association ♦ Safari Club International
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership ♦ The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy ♦ The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society ♦ Trout Unlimited ♦ U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Wildlife Forever ♦ Wildlife Management Institute**

December 21, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

The organizations of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), listed above, a broad coalition of 23 diverse wildlife, sporting, conservation, recreation, and professional organizations representing over 16 million Americans, sincerely thank you for your leadership in championing America's wildlife legacy by enacting a funding level of \$481.4 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System for Fiscal Year 2016. This small increase is a step in the right direction towards full funding of the Refuge System.

We look forward to working with you to secure incremental increases to eventually reach a funding level which allows the Refuge System to fully meet its wildlife conservation mission and America's growing wildlife dependent recreational needs.

The organizations within CARE have been working in partnership since 1995 to increase funding for the Refuge System. We very much appreciate your leadership in securing this increase and look forward to working with you over the next year on the FY17 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Houghton".

David Houghton
President, National Wildlife Refuge Association and
Chair, Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement