

Arizona Wildlife Federation Conservation Federation of Missouri
Florida Wildlife Federation Georgia Wildlife Federation Idaho Wildlife Federation
Michigan United Conservation Clubs Minnesota Conservation Federation
Montana Wildlife Federation National Wildlife Federation New Mexico Wildlife Federation
Nevada Wildlife Federation North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

February 15th, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking
Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom McClintock, Chairman
Federal Lands Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa, Ranking
Member
Federal Lands Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Hanabusa, and members of the Committee,

The undersigned hunting, fishing and conservation organizations write to share our perspective on H.R. 2591, *Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act*.

Our organizations work together as the National Wildlife Federation, founded in 1936 by hunters, anglers, and fellow conservationists. Our first major achievement was helping to lead the coalition supporting passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, better known as Pittman-Robertson (P-R), which since 1937 has funded professional wildlife management by state agencies through excise taxes on guns and ammunition purchased by the primary beneficiaries—hunters.

The commitment of hunters and other purchasers of guns and ammunition to pay for the management of the wildlife we rely on has played an important role in supporting the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation for more than 80 years. The recovery of whitetail deer, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, wild turkey, and a range of waterfowl are all directly attributed in part to this funding source. Despite these many success, many wildlife populations are struggling and we urge Congress to provide more funding to state wildlife management—which is why we all support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647).

This hunter (and angler) funding mechanism is unique among wildlife and natural resource stakeholders, and exemplifies the commitment of hunters (and anglers) to restoring and conserving wildlife. This funding model is, however, threatened by declining participation in

hunting, and projected future declines as many current hunters age out of the sport. It has, on the other hand, been bolstered by a major increase in recreational shooting.

The decline in hunters is a motivating purpose behind H.R. 2591. While we understand and support the goals of the legislation, we encourage the committee to make three specific changes to the bill:

1. Remove the reference to “range construction” – shooting ranges are already addressed more comprehensively by H.R. 788, the *Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act*, a bill that would fund range construction, expansion, and land acquisition.
2. Clarify that marketing and other forms of recruitment authorized by this bill are an allowable use only from funds currently allocated to P-R subaccounts Section 4(c) (Basic Hunter Education); Section 10 (Enhanced Hunter Education); and “wildlife-associated recreation” under Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Programs.
3. Require reporting so states are tracking the effectiveness of various recruitment and retention efforts and best practices can be identified and replicated.

We agree that it is critically important that we address the decline in hunters and state wildlife funding both for the future of conservation and for our domestic economy (wildlife is a foundation of America’s \$887 billion outdoor economy, which includes the \$67 billion hunting economy). We believe that the three improvements to the bill that we’ve proposed will help achieve this goal, without fundamentally changing a program that has served us so well for so long.

Sincerely,

Arizona Wildlife Federation
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Florida Wildlife Federation
Georgia Wildlife Federation
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Montana Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
Nevada Wildlife Federation
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Wyoming Wildlife Federation