

Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Senator Angus King
133 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 13, 2018

Dear Senator King:

The Wildlife Society (TWS) is an international non-profit scientific and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals and students to conserve biodiversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources and habitats. The Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society (METWS) was established in 1976 with a Mission Statement to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society. The membership of METWS includes approximately 100 wildlife professionals and other concerned individuals employed by government agencies, academic institutions, private firms, and non-governmental organizations working across the State of Maine to promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources.

METWS has reviewed the proposed Budget of the US Government for the fiscal year 2019, released by the Office of Management and Budget, and we have some concerns and suggestions regarding the section detailing the budget for the Department of the Interior (DOI). We understand the DOI mission is to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. It is widely known that infrastructure at national parks, wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools (which includes buildings, housing, trails, roads, and water systems) is deteriorating, with older assets becoming more expensive to repair and maintain in good condition. We agree that maintenance and upgrades to this infrastructure should be a priority. METWS also hopes that a new Public Lands Infrastructure Fund to help pay for repairs and improvements in national parks, wildlife refuges, and at BIE schools is established and properly funded so that it can sufficiently keep pace with future infrastructure maintenance needs.

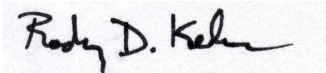
METWS has concerns with the significant reduction of funding for land acquisitions. Our nation's important natural resource boundaries typically do not coincide with ownership parcel lines. The funding in the budget for land acquisition is important to purchase properties that are located within and/or adjacent to lands currently owned by the government. This provides the opportunity to protect entire wildlife habitats, important vegetative communities, and protect watersheds to guard clean water for these lands. One popular mechanism to allocate funding for land acquisition is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Under the proposed budget, the LWCF would essentially be eliminated.

The proposed budget will have numerous negative effects: sportsmen will find access to traditional hunting and fishing areas inaccessible; wildlife habitat for game and rare species will be reduced; Civil War battlefields will disappear due to residential sprawl; local costs to protect municipal drinking water

METWS appreciates that you understand these concerns and are committed to protecting our nation's important resources, the associated recreational opportunities, and important economic benefits. We urge you to vote for funding that is appropriate to acquire lands to protect these resources. Of equal importance, we urge you to vote for additional budget to maintain the infrastructure that is so crucial to our public lands.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact METWS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney D. Kelshaw". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light gray rectangular background.

Rodney Kelshaw, CWB, PWS, CPSS, CPESC
METWS Conservation Affairs Committee Chair
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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katelin Craven". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Katelin Craven
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