

22 March 2019

Honorable Dusty Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
LHOB 1508

Subject: State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program Dear Colleague Letter

Dear Representative Johnson:

I am contacting you on behalf of the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society...

Attached is a copy of a Dear Colleague Letter being circulated by Congressmen Mike Thompson and Don Young supporting funding for the **State & Tribal Wildlife Grants program in FY2020**. This program is the principal program used by states, tribes and their partners to conserve more than 12,000 at-risk fish and wildlife identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Last year **169 bipartisan members** in the House signed on to this letter. We would greatly appreciate it if you could sign on this year and show your support for this successful program.

For nearly 20 years, the **State & Tribal Wildlife Grants program** has had a proven record of accomplishment. There are fewer species on the federal endangered species list as a result of the proactive conservation funded by this program. In FY19, Congress appropriated \$64 million to the states, territories, District of Columbia and tribes. The program is administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and each state provides non-federal matching funds. The Administration requested \$31M for the program in FY2020. Without these funds, state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies will lack the necessary resources to monitor and conduct scientific research on fish and wildlife populations and take actions like invasive species control, habitat restoration and management needed to sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations. The State and Tribal Wildlife program is a model program that helps to reduce conflicts by promoting voluntary incentive-based proactive conservation on private and public lands. It is supported by leading conservation organizations who represent millions of birders, hunters, anglers, hikers, boaters and wildlife professionals.

In South Dakota, these funds have helped South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and partners address the monumental task of addressing the needs of rare species and unique habitats. The agency has also collected data that have helped avoid federal endangered species listings. It is imperative that this annual appropriation continue until we identify and pass long-term, dedicated funds to address the needs of all fish and wildlife species.

We would be grateful if you could sign on to this letter to the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee this year to provide strong and continued support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program in FY 2020. To sign on, please contact Wendy.Zirngibl@mail.house.gov (Congressman Mike Thompson 202-225-3311) or Michael.DeFilippis@mail.house.gov (Congressman Don Young 202-225-5765). **The deadline for signing on is March 25, 2019.** Thank you for your consideration.

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

We are writing to express our support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) program. We appreciate your past support and are hopeful that your support will continue. We believe that the STWG program is an important investment needed to sustain our nation's fish and wildlife. In fiscal year 2019, \$64.6 million was appropriated for the program to conserve fish and wildlife in the 56 states, territories, and District of Columbia, and on tribal lands. We ask that you allocate robust funding for this important, time-tested program for fiscal year 2020.

The STWG program provides states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Indian tribes with the resources they need to implement proactive and effective wildlife conservation actions aimed at keeping wildlife from becoming endangered. It is a mission-critical element of Department of the Interior's budget, as no other program is focused on this goal. As you know, states bear the primary responsibility for wildlife management, and since the 1930's the federal government has worked in partnership with the states to fund successful conservation programs that ensure sustainability of the fish and wildlife species enjoyed by all Americans.

Federal endangered species listings are on the rise. The STWG program is the only program that funds proactive conservation work aimed at eliminating the need to list more species as federally threatened or endangered, saving taxpayer dollars and reducing regulatory uncertainty to business. Robust and consistent funding for the STWG program is key to meeting the shared state-federal interest for keeping our nation's fish and wildlife healthy and sustainable. Now more than ever, we should be focusing limited resources on this kind of smart, effective investment in conservation.

The STWG program supports implementation and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans that were developed collaboratively by leading scientists, sportsmen and sportswomen, wildlife viewers, conservationists, tribes, and private landowners to conserve more than 12,000 species in need of proactive conservation. Congress can demonstrate its commitment to these plans in every state and territory by providing the federal share of support which will leverage millions in state and private matching funds. This investment helps support jobs and the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry.

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to provide the highest appropriation possible for the STWG program in Fiscal Year 2020 so that these important conservation efforts can continue to prevent fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

DON YOUNG
Member of Congress

Support Funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

Sending Office: Honorable Mike Thompson
Sent By: Wendy.Zirngibl@mail.house.gov

Deadline: March 25, 2019

FY 2020 Interior Programmatic Appropriations Request

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in supporting the highest level of funding possible for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) program in fiscal year 2020. This program is the nation's core program for preventing fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. The STWG program provides states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Indian tribes with the resources they need to implement proactive and effective wildlife conservation actions aimed at keeping wildlife from becoming endangered. The program has been successful in preventing the listing of federally petitioned species and helping to conserve over 12,000 species identified by the states as needing proactive attention.

Providing capacity to states, which have primary responsibility for fish and wildlife management, is our best hope for preventing litigation and controversies resulting from federal endangered species listings. Thousands of on-the-ground projects that have restored degraded habitat, reestablished native wildlife, and improved our knowledge about wildlife populations and their habitats have been funded by the program. Many of these projects have been done through voluntary partnerships with private landowners.

The STWG program supports strategic and effective conservation investments in every state and territory and on tribal lands. Funding for this popular program is supported by a diverse group of organizations representing millions of birdwatchers, hunters, anglers, hikers and other outdoor recreationists who support the goal of restoring and conserving our nation's at-risk fish and wildlife.

The program is used to implement State Wildlife Action Plans that were developed collaboratively by leading scientists, sportsmen and sportswomen, wildlife viewers, conservationists and private landowners and identified the most effective and practical means to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. Congress can demonstrate its commitment to these plans, all of which have been revised with the newest science, by providing the federal share of support which in turn will leverage millions in state and private funds. These conservation dollars support jobs and help sustain the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry.

Last year, 169 bipartisan members in the House signed the letter supporting funding for the program. We urge you to sign the letter to the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee this year to provide strong and continued support for the STWG program in FY 2019. To sign onto this letter, please contact Wendy.Zirngibl@mail.house.gov (Thompson 5-3311) or Michael.DeFilippis@mail.house.gov (Young 5-5765). We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON

Member of Congress

DON YOUNG

Member of Congress