

6 December 2019

The Honorable Steven Palazzo
2349 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Palazzo,

The Mississippi chapter of The Wildlife Society is writing to **request your cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 3742)**, introduced in July by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), and 60 of their congressional colleagues. This legislation would provide state and tribal wildlife agencies with a vital source of funding needed to proactively and cost-effectively conserve America's at-risk wildlife populations.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society and its 15,000 professional and associated members serve to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife biologists and managers to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation. The Mississippi chapter of The Wildlife Society includes over 100 natural resource professionals associated with several state and federal natural resource agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, and independent citizens in all parts of the state of Mississippi. We are the largest society for wildlife professionals in the state. Our mission is to use science-based information to support Mississippi's efforts in wildlife management and conservation.

Mississippi has 310 species of greatest conservation need as identified by Mississippi's Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks in their congressionally-mandated conservation action blueprints, known as a State Wildlife Action Plan. This includes species like black bear, paddlefish, sturgeon, walleye, sea turtles, manatee, and many other species that are important to the recreation and natural heritage of Mississippians. Most of these species are at risk due to man-made changes in habitat or conditions in which they live.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are critically underfunded, only receiving about \$60 million annually through the existing [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program. This is not nearly enough for states and tribes to plan for multi-year conservation and recovery projects and keep costlier measures, such as Endangered Species Act listings, from occurring.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would match an appropriate solution to the scale of this crisis. By dedicating \$1.3 billion annually for the adequate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to plan long-term conservation projects, wildlife professionals will have the resources needed to hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important legislation. If you have any questions regarding the Recovering America's Wildlife Act or the Mississippi chapter of The Wildlife Society's support for this legislation, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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