



9 August 2018

Dear Senator Burr,

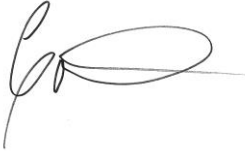
The North Carolina Chapter of the Wildlife Society (NCTWS) is requesting your support for the Senate bill titled **“A bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for the management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need, as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes”** (S. 3223). This bill was introduced by Senator Risch (R-ID) as the counterpart to the House’s Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (H. R. 4647). Senators Manchin (D-WV), Alexander (R-TN), and Heitkamp (D-ND) are cosponsors. **We thank you for your support of the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program and hope you will support this bill as well. However, we request that you work to change the language in S. 3223 from an appropriated fund to dedicated funding.** This language change would also make S 3223 similar to H.R. 4647 and provide a path forward for financial and regulatory certainty at the state level.

NCTWS is the professional society for wildlife biologists and managers in North Carolina, with over 250 members representing dozens of federal, state, and local agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. As part of our mission, NCTWS “strives to be an acknowledged source of current scientific information and expertise, and acts as a collective voice on matters relating to wildlife biology, management, education, and policy.”

We support this legislation so that wildlife professionals throughout our state will be able to hold the nation’s wildlife in the public trust for generations to come. While the SWG program has been valuable and successful, the scope of SWG has not been large enough to meet the need. In addition, SWG’s short term funding creates uncertainty, which challenges states’ ability to plan long-term projects or hire staff. Over 12,000 plant and animal species have been identified by State fish and wildlife agencies as those of greatest conservation need. These species, listed in each State’s Wildlife Action Plan, have been appropriated insufficient funding through the State Wildlife Grant program in the last 18 years. While many NC taxpayers also support these species through the voluntary tax check-off, the amount of money is still insufficient. By dedicating \$1.3 billion from energy and mineral royalties to states for species identified as needing additional conservation measures, you will enable wildlife professionals to keep these populations stable before costly federal intervention, such as Endangered Species Act listing, is needed.

It is our hope that your office will also put your faith in the professionals working on the front lines of conservation by cosponsoring this legislation and working to change the language to provide mandatory funding for fish and wildlife species.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen Olfenbittel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Colleen Olfenbittel
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