



# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

*Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation*

Date: March 5, 2024

To: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives serving on the Natural Resource Committee's Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries

From: The Wildlife Society  
Robert Lanka, CWB®, President

POC: Tom Klein, AWB®, [tklein@wildlife.org](mailto:tklein@wildlife.org)  
Government Affairs Associate, The Wildlife Society

**Re: Legislative Hearing, H.R. 7408 America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act**

Dear Chairman Westerman, Chairman Bentz, and members of the subcommittee:

The Wildlife Society commends Chairman Westerman for his attention to wildlife and habitat conservation and restoration through his recent legislative proposal. America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act, H.R. 7408, is a step in the right direction for conservation, authorizing federal funding for state and tribal initiatives aimed at conserving wildlife and their habitats.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society represents thousands of professional wildlife biologists and managers. TWS works to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation.

This bill calls attention to investments in America's escalating conservation challenges being addressed by wildlife professionals every day. Consistent congressional leadership and investment are essential elements to support these passionate professionals in their work, and we welcome it here.

However, the needs of wildlife and habitat conservation far exceed the authorized, temporary funding levels provided in this bill. The Wildlife Society strongly supports the **bipartisan, dedicated funding of \$1.397 billion identified in S.1149, Recovering America's Wildlife Act, for state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies**. Dedicated, robust funding levels are critical for supporting long-term, sustained program development that will restore habitats and recover wildlife.

Dedicated funding would ensure that states and tribes have the certainty of resources to conduct large-scale conservation projects to benefit all species of fish and wildlife, while effectively collaborating with private landowners and other partners. Uncertain funding levels increase the level of difficulty in facilitating long-term projects, adding challenges to securing staff, external resources, contracts, and partners to do the work necessary to recover America's fish and wildlife. H.R. 7408 contributes to this uncertainty with its non-dedicated allocation of funds and its 5-year sunset clause.

We commend Chairman Westerman for raising attention on this critical need through the introduction of this legislation. We look forward to working with him and the committee to support ongoing efforts to ensure conservation and restoration of America's wildlife and their habitats and ensure fish and wildlife professionals have robust and stable funding that enables them to advance their work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. Laska". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Certified Wildlife Biologist®  
President | The Wildlife Society