



November 8, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,

The United States is facing an historic fish and wildlife conservation crisis that could alter future Americans' opportunities to benefit from our natural heritage. However, this challenge also presents an opportunity to address the dramatic decline of so many species of fish and wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Without much needed investments in proactive conservation, we could see widespread impacts on the fundamental life benefits provided by nature such as water purification and aquifer recharge, flood abatement, pollination, recreation and food and fiber production that are essential to human health. These species declines threaten Americans' quality of life, and our economy, and create regulatory uncertainty for businesses and industries, further impacting jobs and the health of our communities. Fortunately, solutions exist to reverse this decline and bolster our economy.

We write to respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) hold a hearing and markup to advance the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S.3223)*, introduced in July by Senators Risch, Manchin, Alexander and Heitkamp. We believe this legislation is a key part of a critical solution towards addressing the imminent challenges facing America's fish and wildlife. Many of us came together to serve on the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, consisting of members representing the outdoor recreation industry, retail and manufacturing sector, energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, hunters and anglers, other conservation groups, and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. Together, our industries represent more than a trillion dollars of economic impact, millions of non-exportable jobs, and tens of millions of members, consumers and constituents across the country, all who rely on healthy fish and wildlife populations. Today we remain united in support of legislation implementing the Blue Ribbon Panel's [recommendations](#) as the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will help recover species at risk by authorizing \$1.3 billion annually from existing royalty revenues generated by the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters. The funds will be apportioned to state fish and wildlife agencies (state

agencies) to implement proactive conservation programs. Specifically, S. 3223 would direct funds to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration subaccount that was established pursuant to the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act* of 1937. The funds will be leveraged using a twenty-five percent non-federal match and will also be utilized by new and existing public/private partnerships, many of which are already producing positive outcomes to conserve more fish, wildlife and habitat on the ground. Doing so will arm state agencies with the resources needed to assist in the restoration and recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species like the Wood Bison, Red Knot and the Gopher Tortoise, while also preventing other species from being listed. Furthermore, this legislation will provide more certainty to landowners, sportsmen and women, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, retail businesses, the energy and manufacturing industries and many other stakeholder groups.

We further urge Congress to enact the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* with mandatory funding, which would ensure financial certainty to states, and allow them to plan and implement multi-year conservation projects. The House version of this bill, H.R. 4647, includes a dedicated funding mechanism currently.

We applaud the leadership of this committee in your pursuit of solutions to our most pressing conservation challenges in a way that does not place an additional burden on taxpayers. This legislation utilizes an innovative approach to the conservation of our treasured natural resources while simultaneously strengthening our economy and saving federal dollars in the long-run. During a recent hearing in your committee on the *Successful State Conservation, Recovery, and Management of Wildlife*, there was a mention of the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* as a path forward to securing the necessary resources to empower our state managers to get ahead of the endangered species backlog that may occur if adequate and sustained funding is not dedicated to this pressing problem. To continue this important discussion, we encourage your committee to hold a hearing and markup on S.3223.

Our nation has a proud history of addressing massive conservation challenges, including bringing species back from the brink of extinction by helping fund professional fish and wildlife management. This legislation presents the opportunity for Congress to provide future generations of Americans the same opportunities that we have had in our lifetimes to enjoy our treasured natural resources. Together we can build a brighter economic future that includes conservation of our fish and wildlife and helps sustain our communities. We the undersigned appreciate your consideration of our request for action on this important legislation.

Cc: Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Schumer

Sincerely,

Members of the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife:

American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Audubon
Audubon Connecticut
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Barry Conservation District
Bass Pro Shops
Bat Conservation International
Big Game Conservation Association
Cabela's
The Connecticut Audubon Society
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Connecticut Falconers Association
Connecticut Ornithological Association
Connecticut Waterfowlers Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
The Conservation Fund
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Fisheries Advisory Council
Forest Landowners Association
Grand Valley State University, Department of Biology
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
Hess Corporation
Houston Safari Club
Huron Pines
Izaak Walton League of America
Jacklin Rod and Gun Club, Inc.
Kalamazoo Nature Center
Kemp Design Services
Lake Erie Islands Conservancy
Mattabeseck Audubon Society
Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
Montana Audubon
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of State Foresters
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
Nebraska Land Trust
Outdoor Industry Association
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever
Playa Lake Joint Venture
Pure Fishing
Put-in-Bay Township Park District
Quality Deer Management Association
REI Co-op

Richard Childress Racing
Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society
Seven Mountains Audubon
Shell
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Toyota
Village of Middleville, MI
White River Marine Group
Wildlife Habitat Council
Wildlife Management Institute
The Wildlife Society
Yellowstone River Parks Association