

American Fisheries Society * American Fly Fishing Trade Association * American Sportfishing Association * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies * Berkley Conservation Institute * Campfire Club * Dallas Safari Club * Ducks Unlimited * Houston Safari Club * Izaak Walton League of America * Mule Deer Foundation * National Trappers Association * National Wildlife Federation * Pheasants Forever * Quality Deer Management Association * The Wildlife Society * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership * Trout Unlimited * Wildlife Forever * Wildlife Management Institute

September 21, 2009

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the millions of organized sportsmen and women and conservation professionals from across the country, we urge you to work with your colleagues to ensure that the Senate passes comprehensive climate and energy legislation this year. In order to safeguard fish, wildlife, and their habitats which also provide for ecosystems services and quality of life for our citizens, we urge that legislation must include both reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and dedication of an adequate and appropriate amount of the total carbon allowance value for natural resources adaptation programs at the federal and state levels.

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife related recreation generate more than \$172 billion annually in economic activity at the state and local level, which equates to 1% of the gross domestic product. Climate change poses an immediate and profound threat to fish and wildlife, and the healthy natural systems that provide us with clean drinking water, flood protection, food, medicine, timber, biomass, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, jobs, and numerous other services. Given these threats, climate legislation must both reduce greenhouse gas emissions *and* invest in our natural resources so that they will continue to provide substantial social and economic benefits for generations. State, federal, and tribal fish, wildlife and land managers are critically short of funding needed to effectively respond to the combination of these challenges to help safeguard our natural resources in a changing climate. The adaptation effort will be substantial, and adequate resources are necessary in order to be successful.

Our federal public lands are more important than ever in maintaining sustainable ecosystems that deliver services to our citizens, reduce carbon in the atmosphere through sequestration, and maintain viable populations of fish and wildlife with associated quality hunting and fishing opportunities. Public lands also provide crucial habitat linkages and connective migration corridors for fish and wildlife and their management should be directed towards climate change adaptation by the federal land management agencies.

The state fish and wildlife management agencies and the federal land management, natural resources management, and agriculture agencies will be critical components in a viable national climate change strategy and should receive dedicated funding to implement natural resource adaptation measures and strategies to remediate the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats. It is equally important that these agencies engage the private farm, ranch, and forest landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to reduce emissions and sequester carbon on their lands. In fact, it will be critical to ensure that management of state, federal, tribal, and

private forests is conducted in a manner that maximizes their resiliency to climate change and reduces the future likelihood of intense fires that can put enormous quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere when released from trees and soils.

We need not create new state or federal bureaucracies to receive and administer funds for natural resources adaptation to be implemented consistent with national and state adaptation strategies to be developed under the provisions of a comprehensive climate and energy bill. Existing programs such as the Wildlife Restoration Act, Sportfish Restoration Act, Coastal Management Act of 1972, and Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965 already have established procedures, rules, and accounts capable of getting money to the agencies efficiently. Further, a USDA administered offset program would encourage farmers and landowners to implement carbon sequestration activities through land management and conservation programs. For example, the restoration of grasslands and protection of native prairie will sequester tons of carbon on private lands while greatly enhancing nesting habitat for waterfowl and other grassland nesting birds. This approach of protecting, reconnecting, and restoring landscapes will have significant benefits for human communities. Protecting high elevation drinking water supplies will reduce water filtration costs. Reconnecting rivers to floodplains will reduce downstream flooding costs. Restoration activities such as thinning unnaturally dense forest stands near communities will provide high paying, family-wage jobs while insulating communities from the effects of intense wildfires. Use of this harvested cellulosic biomass can also enhance our reliance on renewable energy, thus further reducing carbon emissions.

As the Senate develops comprehensive climate and energy legislation, your leadership is needed to get the job done this year. Please ensure that the climate legislation you consider in the Senate both reduces greenhouse gas emissions and safeguards natural resources, fish, wildlife and our own communities threatened by the changes already set in motion by changing climate effects. Specifically, any Senate bill should establish a national policy framework to help protect, reconnect, and restore public and private lands; provide increased scientific capacity; identification of wildlife migration corridors; coordination and information sharing; and dedicate an adequate amount of the total allowance value to federal, state and tribal agencies to implement identified actions needed to conserve natural resources in a climate change bill. We are appreciative of the natural resource adaptation funding levels in the House-passed bill, and urge you to increase those funding levels if at all possible. We further acknowledge the advocacy of other sportsmen's groups for consideration of the need for and role of other low-carbon based energy sources in a comprehensive climate and clean energy bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this most important issue.