

March 3, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Paul D Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned conservation organizations representing sportsmen and women, outdoor businesses, natural resource professionals, landowners, and other conservationists, we write to encourage you to maintain the important investments in conservation you accomplished with the passing of the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act. We respectfully request that as you begin the budget and appropriations process you set aside no less than \$32.158 billion for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill; \$5.76 billion for NOAA; and \$851 million for the NRCS.

Since 1977, the percentage of the federal budget devoted to conservation has been cut in half. This trend has negatively impacted the ability of wildlife managers and scientists to conserve the habitat on which many hunters and anglers rely. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has lost 12% of its workforce in just the last five years. The Forest Service has had to cut 39% of its personnel working on land management, timber production, and recreation since 1998. And after adjusting for inflation, the National Marine Fisheries Service is operating on less than it did in 2007.

Thankfully, your work on the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidate Appropriations Act began to reverse this trend. The bill included important increases across the board—12% for the Forest Service, 5% for the Fish and Wildlife Service, 10% for the BLM, and 6% for NOAA. We recognize that the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 essentially held non-defense discretionary spending constant from 2016 to 2017. Therefore we ask that you maintain current funding levels for the agencies and programs that provide the foundation for our \$646-billion outdoor recreation economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society  
American Fly Fishing Trade Association  
American Sportfishing Association  
Archery Trade Association  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
B.A.S.S. LLC  
Berkley Conservation Institute  
The Burge  
Coastal Conservation Association  
Costa  
Dallas Safari Club

Delta Waterfowl  
Ducks Unlimited  
Far Bank Enterprises  
First Lite  
Fishpond  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Land Trust Alliance  
Lopez-Negrete Communications  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
New South  
Orvis  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Outdoor Sportsman Group  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope & Young Club  
Public Land Foundation  
Quail Forever  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Simms Fishing Products  
Sitka Gear  
Snook and Gamefish Foundation  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wildlife Society  
Trout Unlimited  
Western Landowners Association  
Whitetails Unlimited  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Wildlife Mississippi  
Yamaha Motor Group