



The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
United States House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representatives  
233 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 2017

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

As members of the America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation (AVCRP) coalition, we write to respectfully request the strongest possible funding levels relative to fiscal year 2018 for all budget function allocations that support the conservation of America's wildlife, fisheries, lands, waters, cultural resources, and their associated economic and recreational benefits. Further, our coalition is strongly opposed to the reinstatement of sequestration and urge your leadership in crafting a new budget deal that avoids sequestration.

The AVCRP includes organizations and businesses that represent millions of members who support funding for America's wildlife, fisheries, and other natural and cultural resources. We are united by a shared belief that our nation's natural, outdoor recreational heritage and historic resources are entrusted to us and future generations for the benefit of all Americans to enjoy. These resources are an essential foundation for the American economy. We believe, as those who preceded us believed, that the care and stewardship of these resources is a birthright we need to invest in today and in the future.

As Congress begins the Fiscal Year 2018 budget process, we want to emphasize the importance of enhancing our nation's outdoor heritage. America's wildlife, fisheries, lands and waters produce exceptional economic value and jobs in communities across the country. Every year, more than \$107 billion in revenue and 9.4 million domestic jobs are supported by the outdoor recreation, natural resources conservation, and historic preservation economy. Annually, the outdoor recreation industry generates more than \$646 billion in economic activity on public and private lands. This translates to important jobs and other economic drivers in communities across the nation, from the local shop owner selling hunting, angling and outdoor recreation equipment to the small-town gas station supplying fuel for tourists heading to the local historic site. This results in a shared economy that is truly American-based and unexportable.

Unfortunately, the federal budget has continued to fund the Function 300 — Natural Resources and Environment, the portion that sustains the conservation, outdoor recreation, and preservation economy, to only slightly more than one percent of the federal budget. Further, this portion of the budget is steadily declining and was sequestered as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011. Federal funds dedicated to Function 300 support national parks, wildlife refuges, cultural resources, forests and recreation sites; working lands such as farmland and ranches; safe and plentiful water resources; marine and coastal ecosystems; urban restoration; naturally-occurring infrastructure, such as marshes and wetlands that clean our water and protect our communities from storms and droughts —all of which have large and quantifiable economic benefits.

We encourage you, as our leaders in Congress, to work with the Budget and Appropriations Committee chairs and ranking members, as well as White House leadership and staff, to identify a path forward that will sustain our outdoor and cultural heritage.

As the FY2018 budget process moves forward, members of the AVCRP coalition look forward to working with you to avoid sequestration and support the strongest possible funding levels for America's wildlife, fisheries, lands, waters, and historic and cultural resources.

Sincerely,

*National organizations*

American Anthropological Association  
American Cultural Resources Association  
American Fisheries Society  
American Fly Fishing Trade Association  
American Forests  
American Sportfishing Association  
Archery Trade Association  
Association of Zoos & Aquariums  
B.A.S.S. LLC  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Blue Goose Alliance  
Coalition for American Heritage  
Delta Waterfowl  
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Izaak Walton League of America  
National Association of RC&D Councils  
National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers  
National Audubon Society  
National Deer Alliance  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
National Wildlife Federation

National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Outdoor Alliance  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope & Young Club  
Preservation Action  
Public Lands Foundation  
Quail Forever  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Society for American Archaeology  
Society for Historical Archaeology  
Student Conservation Association  
The Conservation Fund  
The Corps Network  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trout Unlimited  
Wildlife Management Institute

*State, local, and regional nonprofits and organizations*

Agua Fria Open Space Alliance, Inc.  
American Anthropological Association  
American Society of Landscape Architects

Audubon Alaska  
Audubon Connecticut  
Audubon Florida  
Audubon Maryland-DC  
Audubon New Mexico  
Audubon New York  
Audubon North Carolina  
Audubon Rockies  
Audubon Vermont  
Avian Research and Conservation Institute of Florida  
Bayou Land Conservancy  
Beaver Creek Wetlands Association  
Bethel Land Trust of Connecticut  
Big Muddy Workshop, Inc.  
Big Oaks Conservation Society (Friends of Big Oaks NWR)  
Blue Mountain Land Trust  
Bodega Land Trust  
Broad River Watershed Association  
Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy  
Chelan-Douglas Land Trust  
Chicago Wilderness  
Cleveland County Audubon Society  
Coastal Wildlife Rescue Society  
Colorado Open Lands  
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation  
Conservation Land Group  
Conservation Trust for North Carolina  
Conserve Southwest Utah  
Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology  
Cragsmoor Conservancy, Inc.  
Crow Canyon Archaeological Center  
Deschutes Land Trust  
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy  
Eastern Sierra Land Trust  
Forest Trust  
Friends of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Back Bay  
Friends of Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.  
Friends of Bombay Hook  
Friends of Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Coastal South Carolina  
Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Heinz Refuge  
Friends of High Plains Refuge Complex  
Friends of Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges, Inc.  
Friends of Maga Ta Hohpi Waterfowl Production Area  
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Friends of Organ Mountains - Desert Peaks  
Friends of Pendills Creek Hatchery  
Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands  
Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Rappahannock National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of Salton Sea State Recreation Area  
Friends of Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges  
Friends of Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Friends of Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges and Wetlands  
Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of the Carr Refuge  
Friends of the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of the Ironwood Forest  
Friends of the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge  
Friends of the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument  
Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp  
Friends Of the Morris Wetland Management District

Friends of the Occoquan  
Friends of the Refuge Headwaters  
Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife  
Refuges  
Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife  
Refuges  
Friends of the Wichitas  
Friends of the Wildlife Corridor  
Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association  
Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust  
Green Spaces Alliance  
Greenbelt Land Trust  
Hawk Mountain  
Hudson Highlands Land Trust  
Indian River Lakes Conservancy  
International Bird Rescue  
International Wildlife Refuge Association  
Invasive Species Action Network  
Iowa Audubon  
Iowa Environmental Council  
Kilauea Point Natural History Association  
Land Trust of Arkansas  
Lummi Island Heritage Trust  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
Methow Conservancy  
Michigan Historic Preservation Network  
Midcoast Conservancy  
Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy  
Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy  
Mississippi Heritage Trust  
Mohonk Preserve  
Montpelier Mansion  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
Naturaland Trust  
Nebraska Land Trust  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation

New River Land Trust  
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference  
North Country Trail Association  
North Florida Land Trust, Inc.  
North Shore Alliance  
Northern Virginia Conservation Trust  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association  
Northwest Watershed Institute  
Ogeechee Audubon Society  
Openlands  
Orange County Land Trust  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Pacific Crest Trail Association  
Pacifica Land Trust  
PCC Farmland Trust  
Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust  
Preservation Trust for Vermont  
Preserve Rhode Island  
Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust  
Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network  
Roger Sternberg Forestry & Land  
Conservation Services  
Salem Audubon Society  
San Juan Citizens Alliance  
Sea and Desert Interpretive Association  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
Serpentine Art and Nature Commons, Inc.  
Sierra Business Council  
Sierra Foothill Conservancy  
Six Rivers Land Conservancy  
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire  
Forests  
Somers Land Trust of Connecticut  
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy  
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy  
St Louis Audubon Society  
Standing Cedars Community Land  
Conservancy  
Suffolk-Nansemond, Virginia Chapter Izaak  
Walton League of America, Inc.  
Tecumseh Land Trust  
Tennessee Environmental Council  
Texas Land Trust Council

The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester  
County  
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey  
The Moore Charitable Foundation  
The Ohio Environmental Council  
The Trust for Public Land  
The Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust  
The Vital Ground Foundation  
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust  
Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Inc.  
West Central Ohio Land Conservancy  
Westchester Land Trust  
Western New York Land Conservancy  
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
Western Reserve Land Conservancy  
Western Resource Advocates  
Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association  
Wildlife Mississippi  
Wintonbury Land Trust