



CONSERVATION WITHOUT CONFLICT

Statement in Support of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act

[Conservation Without Conflict](#) is both a proven approach to conservation and a coalition of over 60 public and private partners with diverse goals who support voluntary, collaborative, and sustainable methods for conserving at-risk and listed wildlife and their habitats while keeping working landscapes working. We represent a uniquely diverse range of groups and individuals – from state wildlife agencies to landowner groups, from corporate partners to conservation NGOs – all united in our common conservation interests and goals, a sense of good stewardship, our support for working lands, and our collective desire to pass our lands, wildlife, and the natural world on to successive generations.

America's working lands yield food and wood products, support local economies, provide clean water, expand recreational opportunities, capture carbon, ensure national security – and support biodiversity. The coalition formed around its shared vision of a sustainable and well-balanced national landscape that supports economic viability, improves quality of life, and conserves wildlife in synchronicity by embracing collaborative, voluntary, and incentivized approaches to wildlife conservation on working lands. Together, we are establishing an enduring cultural shift across diverse groups and sectors, yielding a transformational change in the way we achieve conservation while we keep America's working lands working.

America is blessed with plentiful fish and wildlife, unique biodiversity, and a rich heritage of wildlife conservation. But while some of these species are thriving, many more are facing increasing challenges and are in steep decline – increasing their possibility of becoming threatened or endangered. State fish and wildlife agencies have identified 12,000 species nationwide in need of proactive conservation action. There is increasing willingness across working landscapes to collaborate to conserve these species, however the current federal funding for these proactive measures account for only a fraction of what states need to implement conservation on the ground.

The growing wildlife crisis poses a threat to America's vibrant working lands and the many sectors they represent – from farms to corporate lands, from forests to energy corridors. By preventing the decline of species so that they do not require the stricter protections of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), America's working lands will be able to operate with more regulatory certainty and reduced risk. As the decline of numerous species across the country

worsens, preemptive action can reverse this trend and keep species from the critical, yet often costly, “emergency room” measures required by the ESA. In sum, proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, and good for business.

As an organization focused on making voluntary collaboration the preferred approach for wildlife conservation on working lands, we support the passage of the bipartisan Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA). This legislation offers a solution to the many challenges facing our nation’s fish, wildlife, and natural infrastructure. The bill represents a smart, future-focused investment that can help prevent one-third of our nation’s fish and wildlife from becoming threatened, endangered, or extinct while creating a significant number of jobs that support working lands, the outdoor economy, and other key sectors.

We also appreciate that this bill prioritizes recovering species already listed as endangered or threatened, including by providing a one-time boost in funding for programs that primarily fund conservation projects on private lands, such as Partners for Fish and Wildlife and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Private landowners willing to contribute to the recovery of imperiled species can often do so effectively and efficiently with the technical and financial assistance provided through these and similar programs.

The bill will dedicate nearly \$1.4 billion annually to locally-led, voluntary efforts to prevent vulnerable species from declining to the point where they need the protections of the Endangered Species Act, while accelerating the recovery of species already listed as threatened or endangered. These are precisely the voluntary and collaborative efforts that Conservation Without Conflict strives to advance. We believe RAWA presents an opportunity to prevent fish, wildlife, and plants from becoming endangered by creating a dedicated federal fund for proactive conservation efforts, led by the states, territories, and tribal nations. We support this concept as initially recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, comprised of national business and conservation leaders. This is an opportunity to implement a commonsense approach that will protect our wildlife heritage *and* our working lands.

The time to act is now so that we can proactively keep species off threatened and endangered lists while allowing our working lands to continue to deliver their myriad benefits to society. Investing now in voluntary and collaborative conservation for working lands will ensure the conservation of our working landscapes, the copious wildlife they support, and the essential values we ascribe to them.

The passage of this bill would be a strong bipartisan win for the good of the nation’s wildlife heritage as well as our working lands. Hence, we strongly encourage the support of all Members of Congress for this important legislation. We also look forward to working with federal, state, and tribal representatives to implement this pivotal legislative program that will advance our shared goal of protecting our nation’s precious natural heritage while keeping America’s working lands working.