

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

We are writing to express our support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) program. We appreciate your past support and are hopeful that your support will continue. We believe that the STWG program is an important investment needed to sustain our nation's fish and wildlife. In fiscal year 2020, \$67.6 million was appropriated for the program to conserve fish and wildlife in the 56 states, territories, and District of Columbia, and on tribal lands. We ask that you allocate robust funding for this important, time-tested program for fiscal year 2021.

The STWG program provides states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Indian tribes with the resources they need to implement proactive and effective wildlife conservation actions aimed at keeping wildlife from becoming endangered. It is a mission-critical element of Department of the Interior's budget, as no other program is focused on this goal. As you know, states bear the primary responsibility for wildlife management, and since the 1930's the federal government has worked in partnership with the states to fund successful conservation programs that ensure sustainability of the fish and wildlife species enjoyed by all Americans.

The STWG program is the only program that funds proactive conservation work aimed at eliminating the need to list species as federally threatened or endangered, saving taxpayer dollars and reducing regulatory uncertainty to business. The program is also critical to state efforts to recover species that are already federally threatened or endangered. Robust and consistent funding for the STWG program is key to meeting the shared state-federal responsibility for keeping our nation's fish and wildlife healthy and sustainable. Now more than ever, we should be focusing limited resources on this kind of smart and effective investment in conservation.

The STWG program supports implementation and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans that were developed collaboratively by leading scientists, sportsmen and sportswomen, wildlife viewers, conservationists, tribes, and private landowners to conserve more than 12,000 species in need of proactive conservation. Congress can demonstrate its commitment to these plans in every state and territory by providing the federal share of support which will leverage millions in state and private matching funds. This investment helps support jobs and the \$427 billion outdoor recreation economy.

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to provide the highest appropriation possible for the STWG program in Fiscal Year 2021 so that these important conservation efforts can expand to prevent more fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON

DON YOUNG

CINDY AXNE

SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

JULIA BROWNLEY

PETER DEFAZIO

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