

Renewable Resources Coalition * Arizona Wildlife Federation * Arkansas Wildlife Federation
Planning and Conservation League * Colorado Wildlife Federation * Connecticut Forest & Park Association
Earth Conservation Corps * Delaware Nature Society * Florida Wildlife Federation
Georgia Wildlife Federation * Conservation Council for Hawaii * Idaho Wildlife Federation
Iowa Wildlife Federation * Prairie Rivers Network Indiana Wildlife Federation
Kansas Wildlife Federation * Louisiana Wildlife Federation * Environmental League of Massachusetts
Natural Resources Council of Maine * Minnesota Conservation Federation
Conservation Federation of Missouri * Mississippi Wildlife Federation * Montana Wildlife Federation
Nebraska Wildlife Federation * Nevada Wildlife Federation * New Jersey Audubon Society
New Mexico Wildlife Federation * Environmental Advocates of New York * North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Association of North West Steelheaders * Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
Sociedad Ornitologica Puertoriquena * Environmental Council of Rhode Island
South Carolina Wildlife Federation * South Dakota Wildlife Federation * Tennessee Wildlife Federation
Texas Conservation Alliance * Vermont Natural Resources Council * Virginia Conservation Network
Virgin Islands Conservation Society * Washington Wildlife Federation * West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation * Wyoming Wildlife Federation

February 17, 2011

Dear Members of Congress:

As affiliate partners of the National Wildlife Federation, we represent dedicated conservationists from all walks of life and political stripes, from hunters and anglers to backyard gardeners, nature enthusiasts and environmental advocates. What we have in common is a deep commitment to protect wildlife habitat and to ensure clean air and water for every American. Because of that commitment, we reject proposed cuts to the conservation programs that protect America's resources. These cuts are deep, extreme, and painful, and will touch every state and every American.

Conservation has long enjoyed strong, bipartisan support in Congress. Unfortunately, the Continuing Resolution (CR) introduced last week in the House of Representatives amounts to a radical departure from the longstanding national commitment to making the air we breathe and the water we drink cleaner and safer. The CR dramatically slashes funding for our nation's most important wildlife conservation and habitat restoration programs while blocking enforcement of several bedrock public health and environmental laws.

One rider in the bill explicitly extends loopholes in the Clean Water Act that jeopardize drinking water for 117 million Americans and handed over 20 million acres of wetlands and prime wildlife habitat to polluters and developers. The CR bans the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from working to close these loopholes, which threaten wetlands such as those in the Prairie Pothole Region—the breeding grounds for the majority of North America's ducks.

Another rider would weaken the Clean Air Act and force the EPA to turn a blind eye to carbon dioxide pollution from smokestacks. Carbon dioxide is a heat-trapping gas that is building up rapidly in our atmosphere and destabilizing the climate systems that nurture fish and wildlife. In addition to saving over 160,000 lives a year the Clean Air Act protects our trout streams from acid rain, our lakes from toxic mercury pollution, and our forests from tree killing smog. The CR also includes severe cuts to some of the America's most important wildlife and clean energy programs, including:

- 50% from the restoration of America's Great Waters such the Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.
- 90% from the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Elimination of all funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program and North American Wetlands Conservation Fund.
- \$87 million from the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund
- 50,000 acres from the Wetlands Reserve Program—which conserves and restores critical habitat for sandhill cranes, greater prairie chickens, and other wildlife—and hundreds of millions dollars in funding from other agricultural land conservation programs.
- Over \$1 billion from clean and renewable energy programs at the Department of Energy

America's investment in wildlife is not to blame for the budget problems we face today. Over the past 30 years, America's investment in parks, wildlife, clean water, and clean air has fallen from 1.7% of federal spending to 0.6% of federal spending. This includes the full budgets for the Department of Interior and EPA. And the payoff for this tiny sliver of overall federal spending is enormous: Programs implemented by Department of Interior and EPA alone generate 3 million jobs in communities throughout America. A serious effort to address the deficit would tackle the \$4 billion in annual subsidies for oil and gas corporations and a host of other tax breaks and subsidies for big polluters.

Ensuring clean air, clean water and abundant wildlife is not a discretionary and wasteful function of government but a basic and core value that Americans believe in. We ask you to vote against the CR, to oppose its anti-environmental and anti-American riders and to work to restore funding for wildlife conservation, natural resource protection and environmental restoration programs that benefit all families and communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Norman Van Vactor, Chairman
Renewable Resources Coalition
(Alaska)

Tom Mackin, President
Arizona Wildlife Federation

Wayne Shewmake, President
Arkansas Wildlife Federation

Bill Center, President
Planning and Conservation
League (California)

Suzanne O'Neill, Executive
Director
Colorado Wildlife Federation

Eric Hammerling, Executive
Director
Connecticut Forest & Park
Association

Annette Gantt, President & CEO
Earth Conservation Corps (DC)

Michael Riska, Executive
Director
Delaware Nature Society

Manley Fuller, President
Florida Wildlife Federation

Jerry McCollum, President &
CEO
Georgia Wildlife Federation

Marjorie Ziegler, Executive
Director
Conservation Council for Hawaii

Rob Fraser, President
Idaho Wildlife Federation

Joe Wilkinson, President
Iowa Wildlife Federation

Glynnis Collins, Executive
Director
Prairie Rivers Network (Illinois)

Barbara Simpson, Executive
Director
Indiana Wildlife Federation

Don Snider, President
Kansas Wildlife Federation

Ken Dancak, President
Louisiana Wildlife Federation

George Bachrach, President
Environmental League of
Massachusetts

Lisa Pohlmann, Executive
Director
Natural Resources Council of
Maine

Gary Botzek, Executive Director
Minnesota Conservation
Federation

Dave Murphy, Executive Director
Conservation Federation of
Missouri

Cathy Shropshire, Executive
Director
Mississippi Wildlife Federation

Craig Sharpe, Executive Director
Montana Wildlife Federation

Duane Hovorka, Executive
Director
Nebraska Wildlife Federation

Robert Gaudet, President
Nevada Wildlife Federation

Thomas J. Gilmore, President
New Jersey Audubon Society

Jeremy Vesbach, Executive
Director
New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Robert Moore, Executive Director
Environmental Advocates of
New York

Tim Gestwicki, Executive
Director
North Carolina Wildlife
Federation

Russell Bassett, Executive
Director
Association of North West
Steelheaders (Oregon)

Jen Jarrett, President & CEO
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future

Gabriel Lugo, President
Sociedad Ornitologica
Puertoriquena (Puerto Rico)

Tricia Jedele, President
Environmental Council of
Rhode Island

Ben Gregg, Executive Director
South Carolina Wildlife
Federation

Chris Hesla, Executive Director
South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Michael Butler, CEO
Tennessee Wildlife Federation

Janice Bezanson, Executive
Director
Texas Conservation Alliance

Elizabeth Courtney, Executive
Director
Vermont Natural Resources
Council

Nathan Lott, Executive Director
Virginia Conservation Network

Jason Budsan, President
Virgin Islands Conservation
Society

Mark Quinn, President
Washington Wildlife Federation

Shandra Minney, Executive
Director
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

George Meyer, Executive
Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Walt Gasson, Executive Director
Wyoming Wildlife Federation