



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

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October 10, 2012

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4901

Dear Congressman Ryan:

As an organization deeply committed to the conservation interests of America's hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts we appreciated your statement in an October 1 interview with *Outdoor Life* magazine that "we need to open up public lands for access for hunting." Public lands are critical part of America's national heritage, and access for all Americans is a conservation legacy that provides everyone the opportunity to hunt and fish. Public lands also play a critical role supporting local economies: in 2011, 13.7 million hunters spent \$33.9 billion and 33.1 million anglers spent \$22 billion.

We are concerned however that in another portion of the interview you seemed unfamiliar with the provisions of your budget proposal which call for liquidating millions of acres of America's public lands, resulting in less access for sportsmen.¹

While your statement to *Outdoor Life* indicated this was more about "buildings and assets like cars ... [and] vacant properties," your budget proposal specifically touts legislation (HR 1126) introduced by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) as a model to sell federal lands to generate revenue.^{2[2]} In fact, HR 1126 would force the government to sell off 3.3 million acres in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming to the highest bidder.

¹Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives, *Concurrent Resolution on the Budget—Fiscal Year 2013*, H.R. REP. NO. 112-421, at p. 120 (2012).

²Chairman Paul Ryan, *The Path to Prosperity: A Blueprint for American Renewal*, Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Resolution, at p. 33 (2012).
<http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/pathtoprosperity2013.pdf>

³Republican National Committee, *We Believe in America*, 2012 Republican Platform, at p. 18.
<http://www.gop.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2012GOPPlatform.pdf>

⁴Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM), comments on video to Colorado Conservative Political Action Conference, October 4, 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14rCgeMe1EE&feature=player_embedded

The 2012 Republican Party Platform also takes the position of selling our great western landscapes to increase revenue to the federal Treasury.³ Just this week, Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) said that if elected, Gov. Romney would “reverse [the] trend of public ownership of lands.”

Needless to say, these proposals to sell off public lands would ultimately lead to diminished access for hunting, fishing, recreational shooting and other outdoor activities. These measures run counter to strong hunter support for increasing access to public lands, as demonstrated in a new national poll of sportsmen by the Republican-aligned firm Chesapeake Beach Consulting. The poll found that 79 percent of hunters and anglers nationally favor increasing access to public lands.

In light of these contradictions, we’d ask that you clarify whether a Romney-Ryan Administration could be counted on not to sell off or liquidate federal public lands that are vital for sustaining the \$730 billion outdoor recreation industry? Will you commit to America’s sportsmen that there will be no such public land sell-off if Governor Romney is elected?

We appreciate your willingness to speak to bow hunting and the conservation issues that are important to America’s sportsmen. We encourage both presidential campaigns to put forward a more specific conservation agenda including ways in which hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities can be enhanced for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Schweiger', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Larry Schweiger
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation