

September 27, 2016

Representative Coffman
Mike Coffman for Congress
info@coffmanforcongress.com

Dear Representative Coffman,

On behalf of thousands of members and supporters in Colorado, the National Wildlife Federation and Colorado Wildlife Federation respectfully request that you declare your support for national public lands during this election season. We are specifically asking that you endorse the enclosed “Statement of Principles In Support of Public Lands” or make another public declaration of your support for public ownership of public lands.

Our organizations’ members are hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, gardeners, educators, and many more. As you know, national public lands are vital to their way of life and to the way of life of people throughout Wisconsin and all of America. We depend on our national forests, parks, wildlife refuges and other federal lands to provide fish and wildlife habitat and access to places to hunt, fish, and enjoy the outdoors. The iconic landscapes of America’s public lands also sustain our national economy by supporting an outdoor recreation industry that generates \$646 billion in economic benefit annually and supports 6.1 million jobs—and attracting tourists from around the nation.

Support of our national public lands is broad, deep and bipartisan. Republican leaders like President Teddy Roosevelt pioneered the creation of national parks, refuges and forests lands for public use, public access, and public ownership. Democratic leaders like President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded the national estate on behalf of the public. Republican and Democratic leaders since then have followed in their footsteps.

National public lands are particularly important to hunters and anglers, so many of whom are our members in Colorado. Some of our most treasured big game animals depend on the secure habitat and migration corridors that are provided by public land. Many sport fishing species depend on cool, clean waters that originate on public lands. Federal public lands also provide free access for Colorado to hunt and fish every year. These lands sustain our hunting and fishing heritage and fill our freezers. While all of America owns these lands, their wise stewardship is of particularly vital concern to us.

Your 2016 Senate campaign provides an important opportunity to inform our members – and all of Wisconsin – of your position on this issue of such importance. We request that you publicly endorse the accompanying Statement of Principles or make another public statement of support of keeping public ownership of national public lands.

We have also joined 41 national and state sportsmen’s organizations to ask the presidential candidates from all parties to endorse our Public Lands Principles. For your convenience, we

have attached the letters to the presidential candidates. In those letters you can see the powerful breadth of support that public lands have from sportsmen's organizations like ours.

Managing hundreds of millions of acres of federal land for the public benefit requires a careful balancing of many different uses. It is also essential to ensure that current activities do not impair the ability of future generations to benefit from our public lands. Healthy debate about how to manage federal lands is an important part of the democratic process. Your campaign can advance that debate by explaining how you propose to sustainably develop natural resources, protect wildlife habitat, ensure public access, and maintain our public land heritage for future generations. There are no easy answers, but the value of public lands to the American people makes finding common-sense solutions worth the effort.

Thank you for considering this request to endorse our public lands principles. If you have any questions, please contact Bill Dvorak from the National Wildlife Federation at dvorakb@nwf.org.

Sincerely,

Bill Dvorak
National Wildlife Federation

Suzanne O'Neill
Colorado Wildlife Federation