

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2007

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Larry Craig
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Feinstein and Senator Craig:

We are writing to express our support for the State Wildlife Grants Program in fiscal year 2008. We appreciate your past support of this program, and we are hopeful that such support will continue through this funding cycle. We believe that the State Wildlife Grants Program needs a much greater federal investment but, given the present budget realities, we are only asking that \$85 million be provided in fiscal year 2008 to adequately meet the needs of our states.

The State Wildlife Grants Program is the nation's core program to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered in every state. It is a mission-critical element of the Interior Department's budget as no other program in the federal budget is focused on this goal. As you know, states bear the primary responsibility for wildlife management, but since the 1930's the federal government has worked in partnership with the states to fund enormously successful programs to ensure conservation and sustainable use of wildlife species enjoyed by millions of hunters and anglers across America.

At the same time, many species of wildlife have declined dramatically. The amount of federal funding now needed to restore endangered species is far greater than would have been required to prevent their decline in the first place. Through early, strategic action to conserve declining wildlife populations and their habitats, we can prevent conflicts over endangered species listings, saving both wildlife and taxpayer dollars. Adequate and consistent funding for State Wildlife Grants is essential to fulfilling the shared federal-state responsibility for keeping our nation's wildlife from becoming endangered. Now more than ever, we should be focusing limited resources on this kind of smart, effective conservation investment.

When Congress created the State Wildlife Grants Program in FY 2001, we asked every state wildlife agency to complete a state wildlife action plan. The action plans were developed by scientists, sportsmen, environmentalists, and other members of the community, who worked together to identify practical conservation measures to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. This January, the Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that every state wildlife action plan had been officially approved and the state wildlife agencies and their many conservation partners are already moving ahead with implementation. Congress needs to honor our commitment to this effort by providing the federal share of support for this program as it enters this critical implementation phase.

We therefore urge the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies to increase funding for the State Wildlife Grants Program to \$85 million in fiscal year 2008 so that these important wildlife conservation efforts can be sustained.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Blanche R. Lincoln

John Z. Gauer

Craig Thomas

Bob Sanders

Austan M. Collins

Ron Wyden

Maria Cantwell

Mike Crozo

Mark Pryor

Roussell

Barack

Joe Neuharth

Allen Saxe

Caine McCalister

Mary Landrum

John Reed

Tom Harkin

Ken Salazar

Bob Fin
Joe Hill

Whitmore

Kent Larned

Max Baccaro

Dick Dack

Norm Coleman

Albie Starnow

Bill Nelson

Rich Legar

Bob ~~10/22~~

Art Bond

Nur Fairat

Robert A. Meluski

Jay Ruppel

Don Vitter

Ben Card

Robert Mering

Jan ~~10/22~~

Barbara Byers

Pat Roberts

Jon Test

Larl Levin

Olympia Lundy

Joe Webb

Ch. Sit

Tom Hume

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Patrick Leahy

Chris Dodd

Sally Chambliss

Shel By

Edward M Kennedy

Tom F. Kelly

Mike Enzi ✓

John E. Sununu

~~James~~

Chuck Schumer

05 / Rubin

Erin Bayh

Amy Klobuchar

George V. Voinovich
