

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) is a very popular and successful conservation program that has strong support in Congress, the conservation community, and among private landowners including farmers, ranchers and foresters across the United States. NAWCA is a unique, public-private partnership-based program that matches non-federal and federal funds to protect, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife. We greatly appreciate the subcommittee's past encouragement for NAWCA and we urge your continued strong support to this valuable program.

Since enactment in 1989, NAWCA has proven effective far beyond the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. A large number of wildlife species, as well as people, benefit tremendously from healthy wetland systems that are the result of on-the-ground conservation made possible by the act. It is proven that wetlands help prevent flooding, reduce the severity of storm surges and mitigate the damaging effects of soil erosion. Wetlands also improve water quality by working with underground aquifers to filter out pollutants.

NAWCA is one of the government's most cost-effective conservation programs. Federal dollars invested in NAWCA are typically matched by more than three dollars from non-federal partners including corporations, private landowners, non-profits, state governments and local organizations. In the last 30 years, federal funding of over \$1.6 billion has leveraged over \$4.68 billion in partner contributions. Regional Joint Ventures, established to support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, play a substantial role by fostering collaborative efforts to successfully implement NAWCA.

The U.S. has lost roughly half of its original wetlands and continues to lose over 80,000 wetland acres each year. NAWCA is helping to reverse this trend of wetland loss.

We commend the support your subcommittee has provided this program in the past and would like to reiterate the features that few federal programs can match:

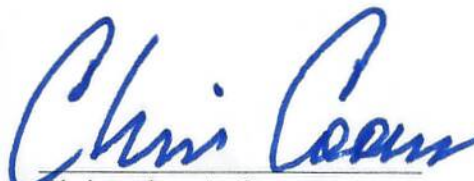
- **NAWCA creates jobs and stimulates the economy.** Outdoor recreation generates over \$887 billion of economic output each year. In many cases, this economic activity is vital to the incomes of rural Americans. One study suggests NAWCA, on average, directly spurs the creation of 7,500 new jobs annually in the United States, generating nearly \$840 million in worker earnings each year.
- **NAWCA is a voluntary and non-regulatory conservation program.** Farmers, ranchers and other private landowners support the program, and every project is voluntary. Incentives allow willing landowners to restore wildlife habitat and conservation practices to their private lands.
- **NAWCA fosters conservation efforts by the non-federal sector.** 6,000 corporate, small businesses, non-profit, state and local entities have more than doubled NAWCA dollars with matching funds. More than 2,833 on-the-ground conservation projects have been implemented in all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico to restore, protect, and manage more than 29.8 million acres.
- **Congress is involved in approving which projects are funded.** The final approval body in the project selection process is the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. The seven-member body includes four Members of Congress.
- **NAWCA has strong support from the states.** All 50 state wildlife agencies are active partners in the program.
- **Demand for NAWCA continues to exceed available funds.** Demand for the program in the U.S. outstrips available funding on a yearly basis. NAWCA remains a very popular program among landowners interested and willing to restore and conserve wetlands habitat.

NAWCA represents a reasonable, cost-effective approach to wildlife conservation. While we understand the fiscal constraints this year, we would like to point to this program's demonstrable success at developing non-federal funding sources and diverse partnerships for the conservation of wildlife habitat. It deserves the subcommittee's endorsement for the most practical funding level. Thank you again for taking the time to consider our views and recognizing the importance of future funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
US Senate



Christopher A. Coons
US Senate



James M. Inhofe
US Senate



Martin Heinrich
US Senate



Amy Klobuchar
US Senate



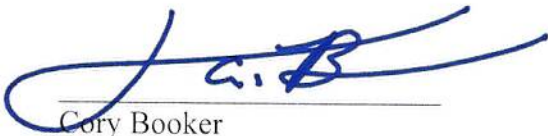
Tammy Baldwin
US Senate



Michael F. Bennet
US Senate



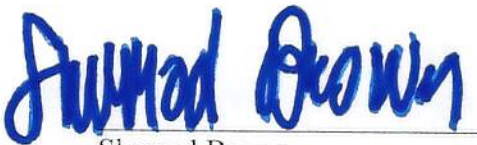
Richard Blumenthal
US Senate



Cory Booker
US Senate



Mike Braun
US Senate



Sherrod Brown
US Senate



Maria Cantwell
US Senate



Benjamin L. Cardin
US Senate



Tom Carper
US Senate

Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
US Senate

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
US Senate

Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto
US Senate

Steve Daines

Steve Daines
US Senate

Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
US Senate

Dick Durbin

Richard Durbin
US Senate

Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein
US Senate

Cory Gardner

Cory Gardner
US Senate

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
US Senate

Kamala Harris

Kamala D. Harris
US Senate

Maggie Hassan

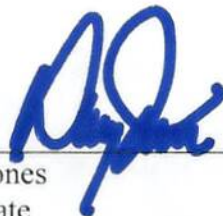
Margaret Wood Hassan
US Senate

Mazie Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono
US Senate



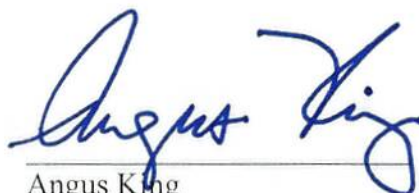
John Hoeven
US Senate



Doug Jones
US Senate



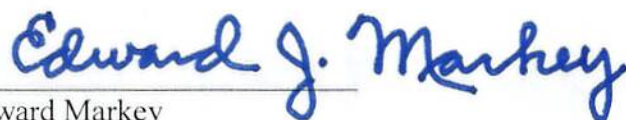
Tim Kaine
US Senate



Angus King
US Senate



Joe Manchin III
US Senate



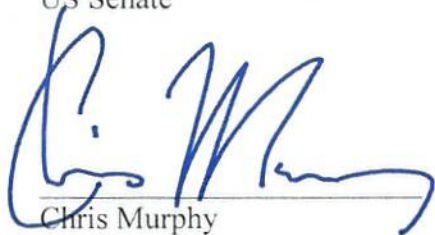
Edward Markey
US Senate



Robert Menendez
US Senate



Jeff Merkley
US Senate



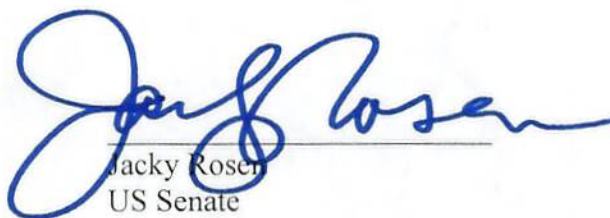
Chris Murphy
US Senate



Gary C. Peters
US Senate



James E. Risch
US Senate



Jacky Rosen
US Senate



M. Michael Rounds
US Senate



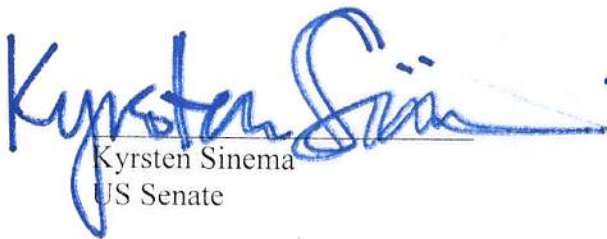
Bernard Sanders
US Senate



Brian Schatz
US Senate



Jeanne Shaheen
US Senate



Kyrsten Sinema
US Senate



Tina Smith
US Senate



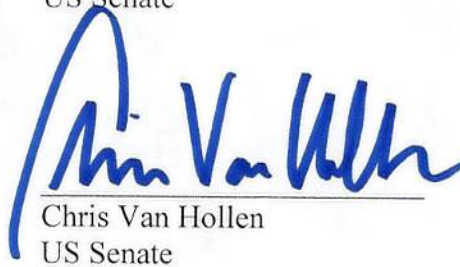
Debbie Stabenow
US Senate



Dan Sullivan
US Senate



Jon Tester
US Senate



Chris Van Hollen
US Senate



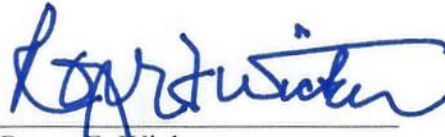
Mark R. Warner
US Senate



Elizabeth Warren
US Senate



Sheldon Whitehouse
US Senate



Roger F. Wicker
US Senate



Ron Wyden
US Senate



Todd Young
US Senate