



September 13th, 2018

The Honorable Ken Buck
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Coffman
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Diana DeGette
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Doug Lamborn
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Jared Polis
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Scott Tipton
United States House of Representatives

Dear Honorable Members of the House of Representatives:

The Colorado Outdoor Partnership, a group of 30 organizations representing outdoor recreation and conservation interests, has voted to support the bi-partisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act bill (H.R.4647). We thank Representatives Tipton and Polis for co-sponsoring this bill. We are writing to request that our entire Colorado delegation support this important bill by becoming co-sponsors.

The purpose of this bi-partisan legislation is to fund 75 percent of what is needed to implement the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan to conserve species of greatest conservation need, as well as similar plans in other states. That is, this legislation introduced by Representatives Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI) creates a 21st-century conservation funding model. Healthy, sustainable fish and wildlife populations not only reduce the regulatory burden and uncertainty, but the economy thrives as well as our health and well-being by providing cleaner air and water. This legislation will facilitate states' ability to address problems faced by species of greatest conservation need before a federal listing is needed and expedite recovery efforts for those already listed. It also provides states with the ability to conduct more wildlife conservation education and wildlife-associated recreation.

The House bill provides for dedicated funds from a small portion of the existing offshore and onshore revenues from energy production, \$1.3 billion annually. This is necessary to create a reliable annual funding stream to enable Colorado Parks and Wildlife and partners to address the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan's identified 159 species of greatest conservation need, and especially the 55 species within this list categorized as "tier 1" highest priority. From such dedicated funding, Colorado would receive \$29,808,000 annually, subject to a 25 percent match in non-federal funds.

This legislation is complementary to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reauthorization bill and the National Park Restoration Act bill. Each of these bills is important. Recovering America's Wildlife Act meets different needs than LWCF. Fish and wildlife are not within the statutory purpose of the LWCF as those funds may not be used by the states for research and monitoring of a species, species and habitat restoration activities, or wildlife conservation education. The bill that would provide funding for deferred maintenance backlog of the National Park Service also is necessary to provide a quality outdoor recreation experience for visitors to view wildlife and other natural resources.

Revenues collected currently from onshore and offshore energy and mineral development are estimated to be approximately \$6-12 billion annually. LWCF current allocations hover around \$900 million-\$1 billion, and Recovering America's Wildlife Act seeks \$1.3 billion. There are sufficient funds collected to fund the proposed legislation to address the National Parks Service maintenance backlog, Recovering America's Wildlife Act, and the LWCF. These complementary bills together contribute substantially to the health and well-being of our citizens, our economy, and our treasured natural resources.

We ask for your leadership in Congress on this bill by becoming co-sponsors. Thank you for your consideration.