

Bear Trust International; Boone & Crockett Club
Buckmasters American Deer Foundation; Campfire Club of America
Congressional Sportsman Foundation
International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
International Hunter Education Association, Izaak Walton League of America
North American Grouse Partnership; Pope & Young Club
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International; The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; Texas Wildlife Association
Wildlife Management Institute

October 28, 2005

To the Senate and House Leadership;

We are writing to you to express our strong support for the Federal Energy Natural Resources Enhancement Fund Act of 2005 [NREFA] offered by the House Committee on Resources. Our community of wildlife conservationists wholeheartedly endorses the findings by the Committee and the sensible solutions contained in Sec. 6514 of the Committee's recommendations for budget reconciliation.

The development of domestic sources of energy is fundamentally important to the Country's security and economy. The challenge before us is to accommodate the equally important natural resources that are affected by such development. Fish and wildlife resources are the mainstay of many western local economies. These resources will sustain those economies long after extraction of energy reserves is completed, but only if we exercise proper care and stewardship during this period of development. It is critical that adequate investments are made now to assure a healthy future for fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

The NREFA offers a fair and sensible way to assure this future. It does so by designating a small percentage of receipts from energy development activities to fund very specific and related purposes. Those purposes include: monitoring and management of wildlife and fish, and their habitats, and air, water, and other natural resources related to energy and minerals development on Federal on-shore and offshore lands; secure the necessary trained workforce or contractual services to conduct environmental studies, planning, development, monitoring, and post-development management of wildlife and fish and their habitats and air, water, and other natural resources that may be related to bio-based fuel, gas, mineral, oil, wind, or other energy exploration, development, transportation, transmission, and associated activities on Federal onshore and offshore lands, including, but not limited to (A) pertinent research, surveys, and environmental analyses conducted to identify any impacts on wildlife, fish, air, water, and other natural resources from energy and mineral exploration, development, production, and transportation or transmission; (B) projects to maintain, improve, or enhance wildlife and fish populations and their habitats or air, water, or other natural resources, including activities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; (C) research, surveys,

environmental analyses, and projects that assist in managing, including mitigating either onsite or offsite, or both, the impacts of energy and mineral activities on wildlife, fish, air, water, and other natural resources; and (D) projects to teach young people to live off the land.

The NREFA specifically prohibits the use of this fund for land acquisition. It is a research and management program designed to help sustain fish and wildlife through this essential period of energy development. Further, it reasonably addresses ALL forms of energy development that can impact fish and wildlife populations.

In addition to targeting critically needed funds to our management agencies, it prudently requires a careful accounting from those agencies of how the funds have been used and how successful those investments have or have not been. This reporting requirement will enable the implementation of carefully established priorities – we will have confidence that the right projects are being implemented in the right places to the maximum benefit of our natural resources. The reports must include: A summary of pertinent scientific research and surveys conducted to identify impacts on wildlife, fish, and other natural resources from energy and mineral developments. A summary of projects planned and completed to maintain, improve or enhance wildlife and fish populations and their habitats or other natural resources. A list of additional actions that assist, or would assist, in managing, including mitigating either onsite or offsite, or both, the impacts of energy and mineral development on wildlife, fish, and other natural resources, and a summary of private (non-Federal) funds used to plan, conduct, and complete the plans and programs.

We urge you in the strongest possible terms to carefully consider and support inclusion of this language in whatever legislative vehicle is appropriate. Its passage by this Congress is of critical importance to our fish and wildlife resources that have been and are increasingly being affected by the development of energy in its many forms.

Questions may be directed to either John Baughman [baughman@iafwa.org; (202) 624-7890] or Jim Mosher [jim@grousepartners.org; 301-223-1533].

Thank you for your consideration.

CC: Senate Budget Committee
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
House Committee on Budget
House Committee on Resources