

March 30, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public  
Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Thomas Carper  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public  
Works  
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Barrasso and Carper and Representatives Bishop and Grijalva,

As former Directors of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), we write to express our strong support of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and for the program's funding and reauthorization. Since the program's beginning in 1989, NAWCA has benefitted the country by supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts, generating economic activity, expanding recreational opportunities and securing water supplies for future generations.

NAWCA is a non-regulatory, incentive-based grant program that for almost 30 years has been promoting vital partnerships between the federal government, private landowners, state agencies, non-profit organizations and many other partners to restore and conserve wetlands and associated habitats for waterfowl and other wildlife. In the past two decades, over 2,644 projects in 50 states, Canada and Mexico have been implemented by over 5,600 diverse partners. In fact, NAWCA grant funds totaling \$1.4 billion have benefitted over 33.4 million acres of habitat. While the non-federal match required is 1:1, NAWCA dollars are often matched 3, 4, or 5:1 from the conservation partners.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of NAWCA to the conservation of wetlands, wildlife and associated habitat, which is why we respectfully urge its reauthorization in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. The current NAWCA authorization expired in 2012 and, given the program's track record, we find this alarming. NAWCA provides excellent returns on federal government investment through wetland protection, improved wildlife habitat and increased water quality, and also provides substantial benefits to communities through direct job creation and local revenue from outdoor recreation, including hunting, bird watching and fishing.

As former USFWS Directors who have implemented on-the-ground NAWCA projects and utilized the program to protect and restore critical wetlands across the nation, we encourage you to reauthorize NAWCA now and work for robust funding for this important program.

Sincerely,



Lynn A. Greenwalt  
1974-1981



John F. Turner  
1989-1993



Jamie Rappaport Clark  
1997-2001



Steve Williams  
2002-2005



H. Dale Hall  
2005-2009



Daniel M. Ashe  
2011-2017

cc: Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Director  
Full House Natural Resource Committee  
Full Senate Environment & Public Works Committee  
Migratory Birds Conservation Commission