

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 24, 2017

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:

We would like to draw your attention to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), a very popular and successful conservation program that has strong support in Congress, the conservation community, and among private landowners 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 support 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 20 years, federal funding of over \$1.48 billion has leveraged over \$4.34 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 approximately 52 percent 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:

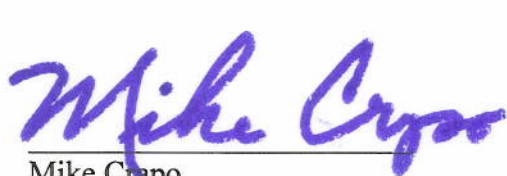
- **NAWCA creates jobs and stimulates the economy.** Outdoor recreation generates over \$646 billion of economic output each year. In many cases, this economic activity is vital to the incomes of rural Americans. One study suggests NAWCA, on

average, directly spurs the creation of 3,800 new jobs annually in the United States, generating nearly \$840 million in worker earnings each year.

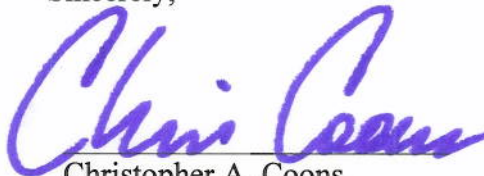
- **NAWCA is a voluntary and non-regulatory conservation program.** Farmers, ranchers and other private landowners support the program, and every project is voluntary. Incentives allow willing landowners to restore wildlife habitat and conservation practices to their private lands.
- **NAWCA fosters conservation efforts by the non-federal sector.** 5,600 corporate, small businesses, non-profit, state and local entities have more than doubled NAWCA dollars with matching funds. More than 2,644 on-the-ground conservation projects have been implemented in all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico to restore, protect, and manage more than 33.4 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,



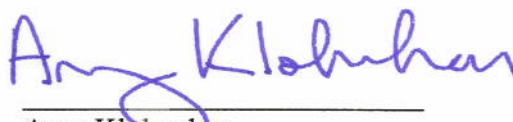
Mike Crapo
United States Senator




Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

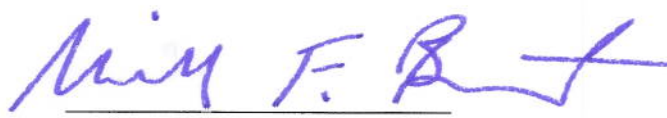



Jim Inhofe
United States Senator

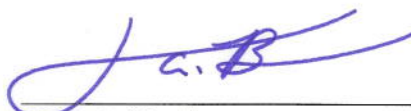


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

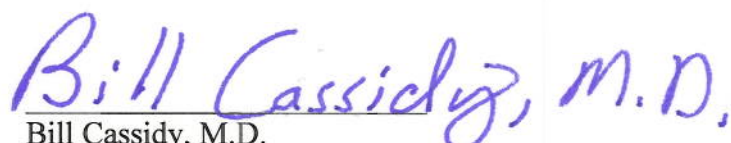

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

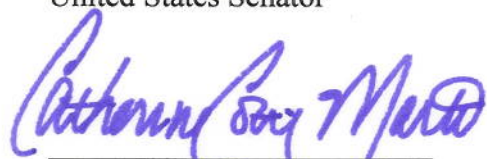

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

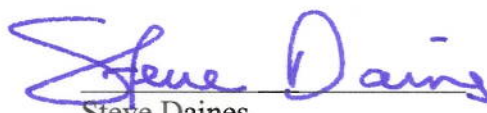

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

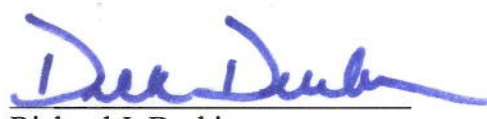

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

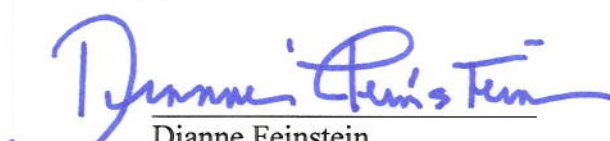

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator


Steve Daines
United States Senator

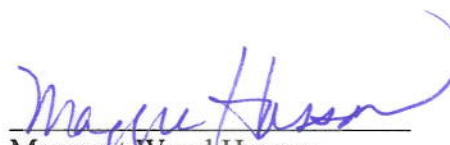

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

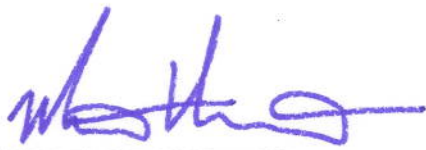

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

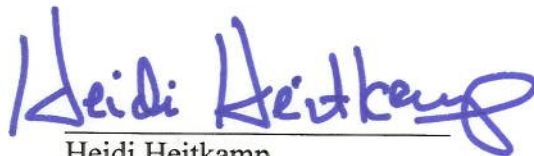

Al Franken
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



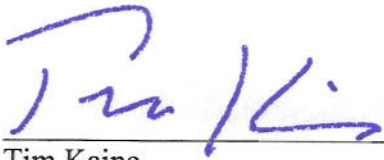
Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



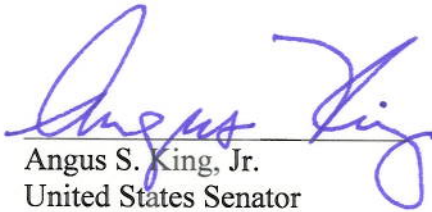
John Hoeven
United States Senator



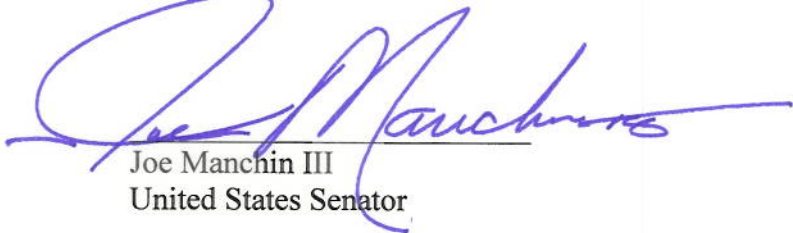
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

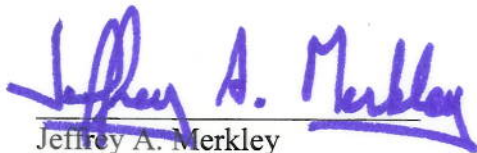


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator



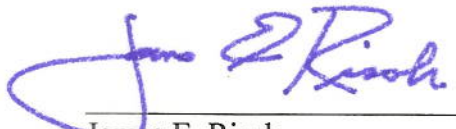
Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



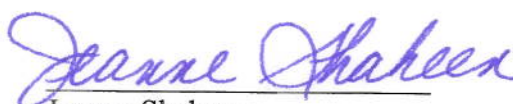
James E. Risch
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



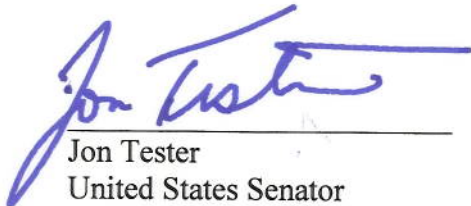
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



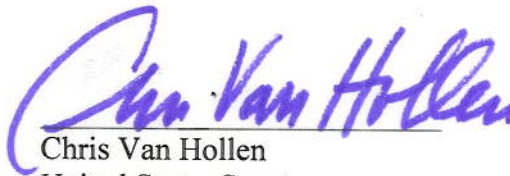
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



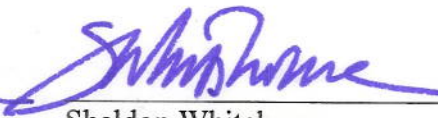
Jon Tester
United States Senator



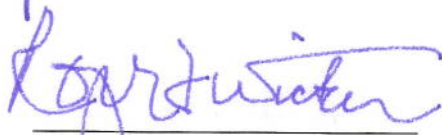
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator