

July 27, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We the undersigned are writing to urge Congress to pass meaningful bipartisan legislation to address the impacts of climate change. Our organizations represent millions of hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, and land stewards who together comprise the centerpiece of a powerful economic engine and have helped to place the United States as the world leader in conservation.

Sportsmen and women, landowners and managers, and outdoor enthusiasts are on the front lines of climate change, often witnessing declines in landscape health and resiliency as well as impacts on our nation's fish and wildlife resources. Shifting climate conditions are leading to more frequent and extreme weather events, catastrophic fires, expansion of invasive species, prolonged drought, disease proliferation, and expanding algal blooms and aquatic dead zones. Changes in fish and wildlife migration patterns, altered breeding seasons, shifts in home ranges, loss of habitat from sea level rise, and even loss of trail and road access due to extreme weather events such as flooding and storm surges are also being witnessed. These changes fundamentally affect our outdoor heritage and the annual \$200 billion hunting and fishing economy and \$778 billion outdoor recreation economy.

We recognize the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Our community also believes any national strategy to address climate change must support and incentivize land and water-based solutions that harness the power of our natural systems to a) sequester and store carbon and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions; b) maintain and build climate resiliency – the ability for natural systems to absorb stress and maintain function in the face of external stressors imposed upon them; and c) ensure adaptive solutions such as managing natural systems for climate impacts. We support immediate actions at the federal, state, local and private levels to catalyze these needed solutions.

With an effective land and water-based strategy that leverages market and incentive-based approaches, the United States could mitigate a fifth of its carbon emissions through natural solutions alone. This is equivalent to removing emissions from all cars and trucks on U.S. roads today. Moreover, these actions will strengthen rural economies, benefit fish and wildlife, improve air quality, soil health, water quality, and water quantity, strengthen the outdoor recreation economy, and create more resiliency for land stewards and communities facing the impacts of a changing climate.

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We have attached a more detailed statement on the land and water-based actions that are needed to address climate change. We stand ready to work with you and rural communities across the country to perfect and implement these policies.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
America Sportfishing Association
American Woodcock Society
Angler Action Foundation
Archery Trade Association
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
California Waterfowl
Captains for Clean Water
Fly Fishers International
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
International Game Fish Association
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Trust Alliance
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Deer Alliance
National Marine Manufacturing Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
New York State Conservation Council
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Outdoor Industry Association
Pheasants Forever
Pope & Young Club
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Ruffed Grouse Society
Student Conservation Association
The Conservation Fund
The Trust for Public Land
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Western Landowners Alliance
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Salmon Center

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Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi

cc:

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Joe Manchin, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture Committee
The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Committee
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Mike Braun, Chairman, Senate Climate Solutions Caucus
The Honorable Chris Coons, Chairman, Senate Climate Solutions Caucus