

November 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy, and Schumer:

The undersigned organizations write in support of the Opening Federal Financial Sharing to Heighten Opportunities for Renewable Energy Act of 2020 (OFFSHORE Act, S. 2485) and the Conservation of America's Shoreline Terrain and Aquatic Life Act (COASTAL Act, S. 2418) and urge your consideration to include these pieces of legislation in any forthcoming end of year package.

Outdoor recreation is a powerful force in the American economy. Prior to the pandemic, the outdoor industry, led by hunting, fishing, and boating generated \$778 billion in economic output, comprised 2.2 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product and supported 5.2 million jobs. Additionally, a new joint report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that recreation and tourism are the top contributors to the significant economic footprint of the nation's oceans and Great Lakes. Throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Americans have turned to recreational boating, angling, and hunting with renewed enthusiasm. Sales of boats, tackle, gear, and licenses have all been on the rise, and to keep this recreation economic engine churning, the time is right for investments in coastal restoration and resiliency-building activities.

As coastal communities continue to endure stronger and more frequent natural disasters, we cannot stress enough the importance of healthy, hardened coastlines and protected aquatic ecosystems towards growing the outdoor recreation sector and making our nation and economy more resilient in the face of disaster.

Our organizations support the OFFSHORE Act proposal to diversify federal conservation funding by dedicating a portion of offshore wind revenue to coastal resiliency investments. These funds would be directed to adjacent states to be used for projects such as coastal resiliency, wetland restoration, hurricane protection, and infrastructure improvements to protect fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. Small businesses in rural, vulnerable areas often face the brunt of natural disasters and depend on robust, resilient infrastructure to be able to make a living. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), roughly 40-60 percent of small businesses never reopen following a disaster. At a time when the entire nation is being hammered by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the added damages from natural disasters on already struggling businesses and vulnerable communities shines a light on the need to utilize untapped resources, such as the nation's

vast offshore wind energy development revenues, to supplement federal and state efforts to protect coastal economies and natural resources.

Our organizations also support the COASTAL Act that would amend the Gulf of Mexico Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) to dedicate more of the existing offshore energy production revenue from the Gulf to support coastal restoration and resiliency. Specifically, we support lifting the \$500 million cap on currently shared revenues and changing the formula for revenue distribution to ensure that Gulf States receive 50% of generated revenue, which would make the offshore revenue sharing program consistent with the onshore revenue sharing program. This additional funding would facilitate critical investments in environmental protections and resilient infrastructure projects in vulnerable communities threatened by sea level rise, coastal erosion, and flooding. It is more important now than ever before to ensure communities are prepared and well equipped to bounce back from extreme weather events as their homes, businesses, and lives lay in the path of increasingly dangerous and costly storms.

We stand ready to work with federal, state, and local partners to ensure adequate investments are made to strengthen coastal communities and protect marine habitats and recreational access. We urge swift passage of these important pieces of legislation that will ensure critical environmental protections and infrastructure needs are met to better prepare and protect the nation's coastlines from the effects of our rapidly changing environment. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Fly Fishing Trade Association  
American Sportfishing Association  
Angler Action Foundation  
Association of Marina Industries  
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)  
BOAT U.S.  
The Billfish Foundation  
California Waterfowl  
Camp Fire Club of America  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Conservation Force  
Delta Waterfowl  
Ducks Unlimited  
Fly Fishers International  
Houston Safari Club

Marine Retailers Association of the Americas  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
North American Falconers Association  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wildlife Forever  
Wildlife Mississippi