

March 7, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Federal Register Docket No. 2022-03498 Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council
Charter Renewal

Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of sportsmen and women and wildlife professionals across the United States, write to express our gratitude for the renewal of the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council (HWCC) Federal Advisory Committee. As our nation's foremost conservationists, our community is dedicated to ensuring the vitality of wildlife species through science-based, on the ground efforts to conserve habitat and expand and enhance public access for hunting and recreational shooting. Our community looks forward to continuing to work with the Biden-Harris Administration to further these shared goals.

Initiated during George W. Bush's presidency and maintained during President Barack Obama and Donald Trump's tenure, the HWCC has existed for approaching two decades. During this time, our organizations have served on or worked with every iteration of the HWCC and, in that capacity, we have worked on an apolitical basis to develop consensus recommendations that have benefitted both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior. For example, the HWCC has addressed issues related to wildlife disease, closures of federal land to hunting and recreational shooting, forest health, federal land management, and other issues of importance to conservation, and sportsmen and women.

Hunters and anglers have long been the driving force behind wildlife conservation in America. In the second half of the 19th century, after witnessing the effects of market hunting and the wanton destruction of habitat, hunters began to organize and advocate for the creation of wildlife refuges. Today, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation has become the world's most successful system of principals, policies, and laws to restore and safeguard fish and wildlife and their habitats through sound science and active management.

The North American Model is supported by a "user pays – public benefits" structure through which sportsmen and women provide the bulk of funding for the state fish and wildlife agencies and conservation in the United States. This funding structure known as the American System of Conservation Funding has positioned the North American Model to become recognized as the most successful conservation framework in the world. It is through this System that more than \$13.48 billion in excise tax revenue has been distributed via the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Act. These self-imposed excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, combined with the millions generated annually through the purchase of hunting licenses and stamps, clearly demonstrates the

long-standing commitment of members of the sporting-conservation community to invest in science-based conservation and wildlife management efforts.

Renewal of the HWCC will go a long way toward facilitating vital communication and collaboration between the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior and members of the sporting-conservation community. As a result, we believe that the HWCC will continue serving both Departments by delivering recommendations for the development and implementation of well-informed and effective policies, programs, and projects.

Renewal of the HWCC demonstrates the Administration's continued support for America's 55 million sportsmen and women and recognizes the important role that hunters and recreational shooters maintain in conservation. Thank you both for your commitment to America's hunting and conservation heritage.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
American Woodcock Society
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl
Campfire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Deer Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion: The Hunter's Institute
Pope & Young Club
Public Lands Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society

Sportsmen's Alliance
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi