

February 3, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell,

We are writing to express our support for habitat conservation funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act being considered by the Senate this week. We represent a diverse membership of conservationists, sportsmen and women, and other outdoor enthusiasts and strongly support the highest funding level possible for habitat conservation and associated green infrastructure to stimulate local economies, **particularly through job creation**, while providing significant, long-term ecological benefits. **We appreciate the work of the Senate Appropriations Committee to include funding for conservation and urge you to support amendments that will further expand investments in habitat and watershed restoration, public lands, and clean water infrastructure.**

Conservation of our natural resources provides a variety of economic benefits through tourism, hunting and fishing, and other recreational activities. The investments made through this Act will greatly benefit our system of federal lands and privately owned lands, and, in turn, help to ensure healthy ecosystems, quality fish and wildlife habitat, and public access for future generations.

It is estimated that more than 100,000 jobs will be created through the conservation provisions of the Act. Habitat restoration projects will provide job-creation benefits in the areas of engineering and biological fields and require a labor force of specialized equipment operators, construction crews, and many other diversified skilled laborers. To expedite project implementation and rapid job creation, we ask that you waive or minimize the match and cost-share requirements for programs that support projects with clear conservation benefits.

Once again, we respectfully ask you to support amendments to expand funding for habitat conservation. We look forward to working with you to ensure the highest funding level possible through the amendment process and during conference negotiations with the U.S. House of Representatives. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

**American Bird Conservancy
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Audubon New York
Boone & Crockett Club
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Defense Fund
Everglades Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
National Audubon Society
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
National Wild Turkey Federation**

**Pheasants Forever
Quail Unlimited
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Management Institute**