

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley:

The *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (NAWCA) is a popular and successful conservation program that has strong support in Congress, the conservation community, and among private landowners, including farmers, ranchers, and foresters 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 for this valuable program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Since its 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. The United States has lost roughly half of its original wetlands and continues to lose more than 80,000 wetland acres each year. NAWCA is helping to reverse this trend of wetland loss.

NAWCA is one of the government's most cost-effective conservation programs. Each federal dollar invested in NAWCA is, on average, matched by more than three dollars from non-federal partners including corporations, private landowners, non-profits, state governments, and local organizations. In the last 37 years, federal funding of more than \$2.39 billion has leveraged more than \$4.74 billion in partner contributions. Fish and Wildlife Service Joint Ventures are private-public partnerships established to support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in priority landscapes for waterfowl and migratory birds and play a key role in science-based collaborative efforts to successfully implement NAWCA.

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 \$1.2 trillion in economic output (2.2 percent of GDP) and supports 5 million American jobs. Every day, recreation on federal lands and waters adds \$351 million to the U.S. economy. Through receipts, permits, entrance fees, leases, and other payments, outdoor recreation on federal public lands and waters directly contributes at least half a billion dollars annually to federal coffers.
- **NAWCA is a voluntary and non-regulatory conservation program.** Farmers, ranchers and other private landowners support the program, and every project is voluntary. 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.** There are more than 7,000 corporations, small businesses, non-profits, and state and local entities that have more than doubled NAWCA dollars with matching funds. Additionally, more than 3,400 on-the-ground conservation projects have been implemented in all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico to restore, protect, and manage nearly 33 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 United States 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. This program has consistently demonstrated success in developing non-federal funding sources and diverse partnerships for habitat. We strongly believe that NAWCA deserves the subcommittee's endorsement for the most practical funding level. Thank you again for taking the time to consider our views and for recognizing the importance of future funding for NAWCA.

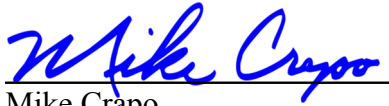
Sincerely,



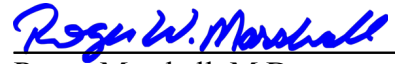
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



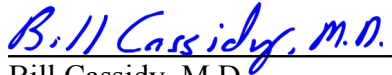
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



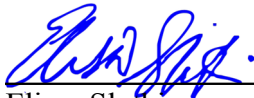
Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



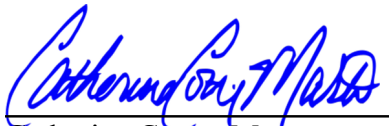
James E. Risch
United States Senator



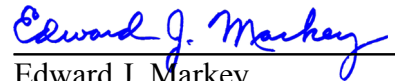
Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



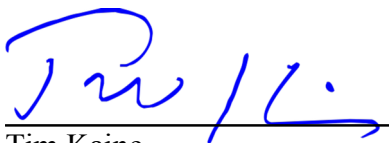
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator




Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



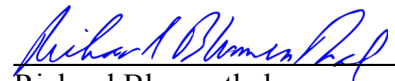
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



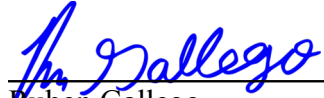
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



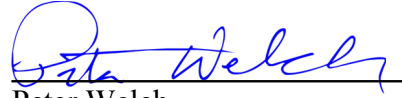
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



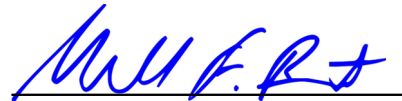
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator




Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



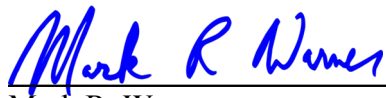
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



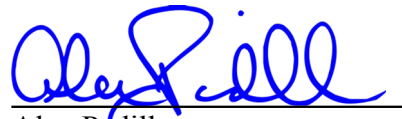
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



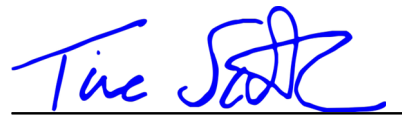
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



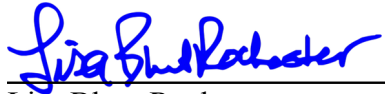
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



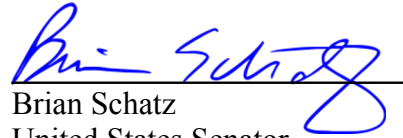
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



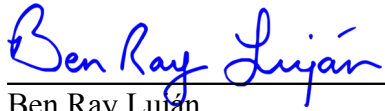
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



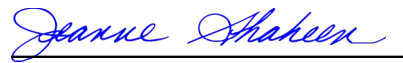
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



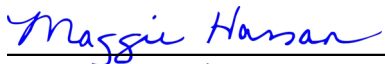
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



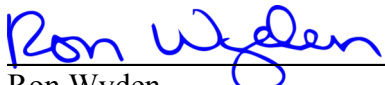
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



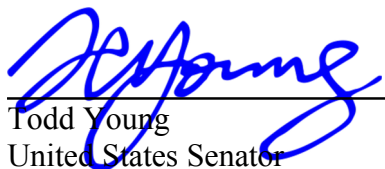
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



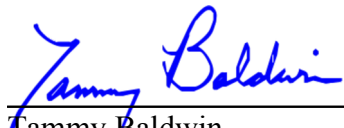
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



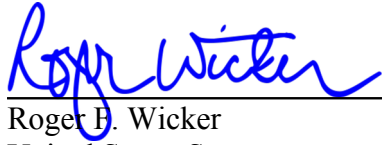
Ted Budd
United States Senator



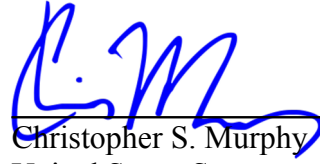
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Tim Sheehy
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

**Interior and Environment Group Letter Table
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ID	Sub	Request Agency or Account	Request Project Name	Request (\$000)
219850	INTERIOR Group	[Title I]/[Department of the Interior]/[Fish and Wildlife Service]/[North American Wetlands Conservation Fund] [Member Staff] - Jenna Mayhew Jenna_Mayhew@coons.senate.gov 202-224-0129	North American Wetlands Conservation Fund [Member's Request (text)] - Continued strong support	\$0