



July 13, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chair, Senate EPW Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Ranking Member, Senate EPW Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Comments on S. 1514, the HELP for Wildlife Act

Chairman Barrasso and members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee,

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) would like to thank you for holding a hearing on S 1514, the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act. We strongly support several key provisions of this bill and encourage you to pass it without delay.

Section 2 of the bill would provide state and federal agencies greater flexibility to use federal Pittman-Robertson funds for construction of public recreational shooting ranges. Since Pittman-Robertson funds are collected from excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment, an appropriate amount should be designated for shooting ranges that will help recruit and retain recreational shooters and expand hunter education opportunities.

We are also fully in support of this bill's requirements for the Interior Department to reissue final rules for gray wolves in Wyoming and in the Western Great Lakes states. State management of gray wolves was recently restored in Wyoming as a result of a court decision, but the possibility of reversing it remains unless judicial review is preempted—as provided in this bill.

Much like Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, gray wolves have far exceeded recovery goals in the Western Great Lakes states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and no longer require federal protection. This bill would require the Interior Department to reissue its 2011 final rule removing gray wolves in the Western Great Lakes states and prevent further judicial review of this decision.

Gray wolves have had a significant impact on elk, deer, other wildlife and livestock. We remain confident wildlife agencies in these states, through public hunting and trapping, will be able to strike a balance for gray wolf and ungulate population management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

David Allen
President & CEO