



December 20, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Committee
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA), I am writing to confirm our strong support for the *America's Conservation Enhancement Act* (S. 3051) and are extremely pleased that it passed your committee by unanimous consent on December 17, 2019. SEAFWA is an organization whose members are the state agencies with primary responsibility for management and protection of the fish and wildlife resources in 15 states, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. We have a strong interest in federal legislation, policies, and programs that effect state fish and wildlife management responsibilities and efforts; collaboration among state, federal, and territorial agencies; nongovernmental conservation partners; and private landowners.

The SEAFWA members applaud and thank you, along with members of the Senate Committee on Environment, and Public Works for advancing the *America's Conservation Enhancement Act* (S. 3051). This bill contains pieces of legislation that are vitally important to our state fish and wildlife agency members and our conservation partners. Provisions therein will help foster important collaborative approaches to fish and wildlife conservation throughout the country.

SEAFWA strongly supports S. 3051 and is pleased to see included therein the *Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act*. The Act will help us recruit and retain the next generation of hunters and recreational target shooters who are needed to ensure funding for wildlife conservation and management activities in the future.

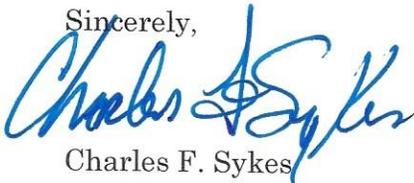
SEAFWA is home to the Southeastern Aquatic Resources Partnership, one of the 20 fish habitat partnerships that will benefit from the provisions in the *National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act*. The *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (NAWCA) provides for lifecycle conservation of our nation's waterfowl populations and is critical for supporting the wetland habitats upon which these and other wetland dependent species depend.

The State of the Birds Report published in September 2019, indicated we have lost 3 billion birds since 1970, with the exception of waterfowl and raptor populations which have increased 56% and over 200%, respectively. The NAWCA is, in part, responsible for the positive trends in these species' populations and is an integral component of our state agencies' conservation strategies to manage waterfowl populations through voluntary, incentive-based habitat conservation measures.

Finally, thank you for placing a priority on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and we look forward to working with our colleagues to implement the provisions of the bill that provide for a CWD Task Force. These provisions are critically needed to further much needed research, assistance, informed management strategies, and improve our understanding of this challenging and complex disease. Many of our rural communities depend on the economic benefits of deer hunting for their livelihoods and well-being, which is jeopardized by CWD.

We respectfully request that you work with other members of the Committee, the full Senate, and Senate leadership to swiftly advance this bill through the legislative process in the Senate as soon as possible. SEAFWA stands ready to support your efforts and to help enact this crucial package of legislation as soon as possible during this Congress.

Sincerely,



Charles F. Sykes
President

Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

<http://www.seafwa.org>