

July 5, 2018

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC, 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

On behalf of the millions of hunters and anglers that our organizations represent, we write to express our enthusiastic support of the proposed 2018-2019 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations, Docket no. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2018-0020.

We appreciate the Secretary's proposal to open and expand hunting and fishing opportunities on 30 refuges. These refuges, spanning 248,000 acres, provide Americans more opportunities than ever before to recreate and enjoy our natural resources. As hunting participation has declined 29 percent from 2011 to 2016, providing sportsmen and women with increased hunting opportunities is vital to increasing participation and preserving our nation's hunting heritage.

Outdoor recreation is an important economic booster for communities across America. Refuges support a \$2.4 billion recreation industry. With more than 53 million visitors a year, refuges provide a unique opportunity to experience these landscapes while supporting local economies and creating more than 35,000 jobs.

We look forward to your leadership, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to continue increasing hunting and fishing access to other National Wildlife Refuges, where appropriate. Not only are hunters and anglers America's original conservationists, they also generate the majority of funding for state fish and wildlife agencies. Therefore, providing them with enhanced access opportunities is important to the conservation of our nation's natural resources.

This proposal is good for conservation, good for hunters and anglers, good for the economy and good for the taxpayers. We look forward to working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the entire Department of the Interior to help identify other ways to enhance access for sportsmen and women and other outdoor recreationists across America.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bear Trust International
Boone and Crockett Club
Camp Fire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
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 Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Texas Wildlife Association
The Wildlife Society
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi

CC: Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt, Department of the Interior
Principal Deputy Director Greg Sheehan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service