



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 19, 2010

The Honorable James P. Moran, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1601 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson:

As Members of Congress who value our nation's magnificent wildlife and outdoor heritage, we write to thank you for your past support of our National Wildlife Refuge System and to respectfully request your continued support for the Refuge System in the FY 2011 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

In order to overcome decades of inadequate funding and accumulating challenges, an analysis developed by the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) entitled, "*Restoring America's Wildlife Refuges 2010, Maintaining Momentum to Solve the Refuge System Funding Crisis*", estimates \$900 million is needed in the annual operations and maintenance budget for the Refuge System. While we fully recognize the current fiscal challenges, to help solve the funding shortfall for the Refuge System modest annual funding increases in FY 2011 and beyond are needed. Such funding will ensure the Refuge System will be able to properly administer its nearly 150 million acres, host educational nature programs for schoolchildren, restore degraded wildlife habitat, and much more.

In recent years, the Wildlife Refuges have had to make due with static budgets and declining buying power in the face of a crippling maintenance backlog and rising challenges such as invasive species, law enforcement, and wildfire. Though the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has implemented cost saving measures, the Refuge System reached a tipping point in the years following its Centennial in 2003. To address shortfalls FWS implemented a downsizing plan for the Refuge System that even with the recent years of funding increases resulted in an overall 10 percent loss in staff.

While these downsizing plans were temporarily shelved the past three years, if future budgets are stagnant or cut, the plans will be dusted off and scores of Refuges will be completely de-staffed,

significant acreage will be remotely managed by distantly located staff, and services to the public and wildlife will be significantly cut, including loss of law enforcement, hunting and fishing programs, invasive species control, species restoration, and environmental education and other public use programs.

Through your leadership the Refuge System's operations and maintenance budget received much needed funding increases in FY 2008, FY 2009 and FY 2010. The FY 2008 and FY 2009 funding increases and the FY 2010 funding level of \$503 million are a significant step in restoring the commitment first made to America's wildlife by Teddy Roosevelt more than 100 years ago. Continued and sustained investment to adequately manage the System remains a high priority.

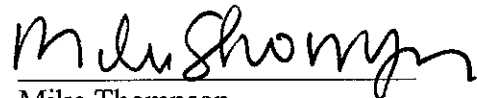
The National Wildlife Refuge System is our nation's wildlife trust. America is blessed with an astounding diversity and abundance of wildlife, and the Refuge System forms the core of our commitment to maintaining this American treasure for generations. Over 40 million Americans enjoy visiting the Refuge System each year, and their travel and recreation generates \$1.7 billion in sales to regional economies, and creates more than 27,000 jobs and \$543 million in employment income. Our Refuge System is the premiere wildlife system in the world, yet years of accumulating debts are putting this national treasure at risk.

We hope you will join us in support of continued investment in the Refuge System in FY 2011. Again, thank you for your leadership in supporting and safeguarding our National Wildlife Refuge System.

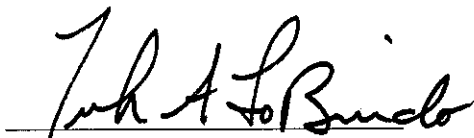
Sincerely,



Michael N. Castle  
Wildlife Refuge Caucus Co-Chair



Mike Thompson  
Wildlife Refuge Caucus Co-Chair



Frank A. LoBiondo  
Wildlife Refuge Caucus Co-Chair



Ed Perlmutter  
Wildlife Refuge Caucus Co-Chair

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Bianca

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D. Reed

R. A. Meyer

Niki Tsoyos

Heath Allin

Alan W.

Rush Holt

Carol Shea-Power

Ben Kind

Mazie K. Hirano

Michael W. Michael

Ann Van Kollen

Lois Capps

Alan Bee

Thye R.

Jim Langewiesche

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Edward J. Marking

Rosa DeLauro

Paul Blumenthal

Carl B. Maloy

Mike PW

SMO

Pete Stark

Melanie G. Rudell

John P. Orlin

Ken A. Waxman

Jeannette Waller

Alce L. Hastings

Tammy Baldwin

Paul E. Krivjanski

John M. Latta

Paul Russell

Dennis J. Keenick

Howard L. Berman

Arnold E. Connolly

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Jim Oberstar

Bob Filner

Wm. J. Shoo

John L. Selner

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