

Statement from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Supporting the Introduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the Senate

Washington D.C. (July 17, 2018) - The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly supports the introduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S.3223) in the U.S. Senate today. Senators James Risch (R-Idaho) and Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia) introduced legislation that recommends funding for conservation of those fish and wildlife species in greatest need across the country.

This bipartisan legislation would authorize \$1.3 billion in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program to conserve a full array of fish and wildlife. The Senate bill complements the House version ([H.R. 4647](#)), introduced in December 2017 by Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE-1) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12), which has gained strong, bipartisan co-sponsorship due to its innovative approach to solving America's wildlife crisis, with [the current list of co-sponsors growing to more than 75 members](#).

“Our nation's fish and wildlife are the foundation of our natural heritage, held in the public trust for all to enjoy, and cared for by the state fish and wildlife agencies. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would help all species — including many that are hunted and fished and those that are not— continue to thrive,” stated Virgil Moore, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Director of Idaho Fish and Game. “We applaud Senator Risch from my home state of Idaho and Senator Manchin of West Virginia for their leadership on this important legislation that will help management and conservation of fish and wildlife, and bolster our great outdoor recreation economy.”

“This legislation puts states back in control of conservation efforts and affords them greater flexibility to meet their state-specific needs, while also protecting the legacy of hunting and the value the industry brings to wildlife conservation,” said Senator Risch, Co-Chair of the Congressional Sportsman's Caucus. “Additionally, by engaging in these proactive, voluntary conservation actions, we will save millions of tax dollars that are otherwise spent on restoring threatened and endangered species.”

“In West Virginia hunting, fishing and outdoor activities are family traditions deeply ingrained in who we are as a state. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will ensure we continue to promote our state's unique wildlife and preserve our rich outdoor traditions. That's why I am proud to introduce this bipartisan bill to make West Virginia ever more wild and wonderful,” Senator Manchin said.

“The Blue Ribbon Panel recommended a proactive approach to conservation funding,” said Greg Hill, President and Chief Operating Officer, Hess Corporation. “The funding model that forms the basis for this legislation is better for taxpayers and businesses and, most importantly, better for the long-term conservation of fish and wildlife species in danger.”

“This bill is complementary to existing natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation programs and will allow all Americans to become investors in fish and wildlife conservation,” said Executive Director Ron Regan. “Our funding model can no longer keep up with the needs of the full array of fish and wildlife in this country. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act provides a modern solution to an age old problem and allows states to more fully implement their State Wildlife Action Plans.”

These critical efforts are supported by the [Alliance for America’s Fish & Wildlife](#), whose purpose is to create a 21st-century funding model for critically needed conservation of our nation’s most precious natural resources, our fish and wildlife. This effort was built upon the strong partnership created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, consisting of members representing the outdoor recreation, retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, sportsmen’s groups and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies.

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The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America’s fish and wildlife agencies to advance sound, science-based management and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. The Association represents its state agency members on Capitol Hill and before the Administration to advance favorable fish and wildlife conservation policy and funding and works to ensure that all entities work collaboratively on the most important issues. The Association also provides member agencies with coordination services on cross-cutting as well as species-based programs that range from birds, fish habitat and energy development to climate change, wildlife action plans, conservation education, leadership training and international relations. Working together, the Association’s member agencies are ensuring that North American fish and wildlife management has a clear and collective voice.