April 4, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We are writing to express our support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. We appreciate your past support and hope that you will make funding for this program a priority. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, now in its twenty-second year, provides a critical investment that is necessary to sustain our nation’s biodiversity. In FY2023, $73.8 million was appropriated to the program, benefiting every state, territory, the District of Columbia and Indian tribes. These funds leveraged tens of millions in state and private funds. We ask that you provide the most robust funding possible for the program in FY2024.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program is the nation’s core program to prevent fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. The program provides funding for priority conservation work aimed at preventing and recovering endangered species. The program is saving taxpayer dollars by supporting interventions before federal listing is required for many species, cutting down on endangered species controversies. Successes in every state, territory and the District of Columbia are highlighted in a September 2020 report by the US Fish and Wildlife Service that documents 20 years of success for the program.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program funds on-the-ground conservation work such as invasive species control, habitat management, land protection, species reintroduction, disease abatement, research, and monitoring needed to conserve over 12,000 animals identified as Species in Greatest Conservation Need in State Wildlife Action Plans. These plans were developed by each state, territory and the District of Columbia using the best available science and with input from farmers, ranchers, business-owners, conservationists, and the public.

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program directly benefits over 100 million people who depend on healthy fish and wildlife and habitat for birding, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking and other forms of wildlife-dependent recreation. The program, in 2021, was important to sustaining the $454 billion outdoor recreation economy, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and helps states meet their statutory responsibility for conserving fish and wildlife for future generations.
Again, we appreciate the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies past support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program and encourage you to make funding for this program a priority in FY2024. Stronger funding for the program will expand conservation work to a greater number of the species that are in decline. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

James E. Risch  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment and Public Works

Mike Rounds  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Thom Tillis  
United States Senator
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Roger Marshall M.D.  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Ted Budd  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Alex Padilla  
United States Senator
Tina Smith
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator
Jon Tester  
United States Senator  

Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator  

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator  

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator  

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator  

Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator  

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator  

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator  

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator  

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator