

FINAL RESOLUTION

ENHANCING THE FALL FLIGHTS PROGRAM AND INCREASING STATE AGENCY INVESTMENTS IN CANADIAN WATERFOWL BREEDING GROUNDS

WHEREAS, 2021 marks the 35th anniversary of the signing of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) which has contributed to the protection, restoration and enhancement of wetlands and associated habitats in Canada, the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the NAWMP has been the most successful continental wildlife conservation effort in history, providing recreational, environmental, and economic benefits by conserving habitat for important waterfowl and other wetland-related species throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 update of the NAWMP acknowledged these habitat accomplishments while also pointing to the increasing threats to critical waterfowl habitat across North America and the need to increase our conservation efforts, grow the number of hunters, and engage other members of society who could contribute to and benefit from wetland and waterfowl conservation; and

WHEREAS, hunters and anglers in the United States historically spend \$76 billion per year, and hunting and fishing activities support more than 1.33 million jobs and generate more than \$25 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes, and

WHEREAS, Canadian breeding grounds provide over 70% of North American waterfowl production (ducks, geese, and swans), without which there would not be a fall flight that results in US waterfowl hunters generating an economic output of over \$3 billion per year, including state tax revenues of more than \$202 million, and generating approximately \$40 million per year for wetland conservation on National Wildlife Refuges through the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, and

WHEREAS, the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) was signed into law in December 1989, reauthorized at \$60 million in 2020, and provides a significant source of funding for wetland and waterfowl projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the NAWCA has provided \$1.83 billion in federal grants and facilitated the conservation of over 30 million acres of wetlands and associated habitats in all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands by more than 6,350 partners that have invested over \$3.75 billion in matching funds, and

WHEREAS, NAWCA requires that a minimum of 30 percent of appropriated funds be used outside the U.S., and further requires that U.S. federal funds sent to Canada through NAWCA be

matched at least 1:1 by non-federal funds, of which at least 50 percent of the matching funds must originate from within the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, 2005 and again in 2011 the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies passed resolutions that affirmed a goal for the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to contribute up to \$10 million annually through the Fall Flights program for waterfowl habitat projects in Canada, and

WHEREAS, the Association's \$10 million annual goal for the Fall Flights program has not yet been attained, there is a shared interest in working to improve the effectiveness of the program and to increase the collective investments of states and make progress toward the Fall Flights goal, recognizing that states differ in their capacity to attain individual goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies reaffirm the original \$10 million annual goal for the Fall Flights program and for states to strive to maximize their investments to at least achieve an interim \$5 million annual goal by 2026 as U.S. matching funds for NAWCA projects in Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies commit to making progress toward achieving the interim \$5 million goal and the long-term \$10 million goal by encouraging each state to make an annual investment, based on the state's proportion of waterfowl hunters and duck harvests averaged over the period from 2000 through 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies work with Canadian government agencies to establish goals for increased investments in wetland conservation and NAWCA match for state monies provided through the Fall Flights program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies create a standing "Fall Flights Advisory Committee" to oversee the implementation of the Fall Flights program, to report annually to the Association's membership, and to provide recommendations to the Association's President and Executive Director.