



NEWS RELEASE

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Wildlife Conservation Bill Brings Bipartisan Lawmakers, Diverse Stakeholders Together and Charts Path Forward in U.S. House of Representatives

Today, A Major Win for Wildlife and New Hope for Bipartisan Spirit in Congress

WASHINGTON, DC – January 19, 2022 – Today, a major win for America's wildlife was accomplished, renewing hope for bipartisan cooperation in the U.S. Congress. The U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources voted in favor of passing the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* (H.R.2773) out of committee to advance the bill one important step closer toward passage. The bill was favorably reported by a majority of members of the committee including Republicans and Democrats, highlighting the importance of wildlife conservation to both parties and unifying the Congress with a shared goal of advancing this historic bill that is so desperately needed to fund wildlife conservation in America.

The *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* was introduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) in the 117th Congress on Earth Day last year. The bill will dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement their science-based wildlife action plans and an additional \$97.5 million for tribal fish and wildlife managers to conserve fish and wildlife on tribal lands and waters. This will provide dedicated funding, so state and tribal wildlife managers can proactively conserve fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need in a voluntary, non-regulatory manner before federal listing under the *Endangered Species Act* is warranted. This bill will get Americans back to work immediately, creating an estimated 33,000 jobs each year restoring natural resources and bolstering community resilience while protecting our valuable natural infrastructure. This bill currently has [151 bipartisan cosponsors](#) in the House and 32 in the Senate and is perhaps the most impactful wildlife conservation funding bill in a generation.

The [Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife](#) represents the national coalition of diverse stakeholders united around the shared vision for the future of wildlife conservation funding and strongly supports passage of the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* in this Congress. Its members include the outdoor recreation, retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, sportsmen's and other conservation groups and state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies.

"We are in the midst of an unprecedented biodiversity crisis and we need action now. Without action, the list of federally threatened and endangered species will grow from nearly 1,600 species today to thousands more in the future," **said Rep. Debbie Dingell**. "The *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* represents a strong commitment to addressing this crisis using innovative, on-the-ground collaboration



to protect fish and wildlife across the nation. I'm grateful to AFWA for their strong support in advancing this bill that will protect our nation's environmental heritage for years to come."

Proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, good for business and good for our communities. By directing funds to State Wildlife Action Plans through the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act*, America will be fueling shovel ready projects that immediately create jobs in a sector with one of the highest returns on investment and supporting continued world class outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute roughly \$700 billion in annual economic output.

"The single most exciting fish and wildlife protection initiative in decades, *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* (RAWA) is a bold, collaborative upstream initiative that promotes continuity of habit while avoiding the costly, invasive downstream emergency room procedures of the *Endangered Species Act*," said Congressman Fortenberry. "It's why we have a diverse group of persons from across the political landscape—hunters, hikers, anglers, birders—aligned so beautifully around it. Today's passage out of committee is a critical step in RAWA's long journey into law."

Not since enactment of the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson acts, that provided critical funding for fish and wildlife on the brink of extinction, have we had an opportunity to pass legislation of such magnitude to the overall health and wellbeing of our wildlife and our communities. We hope Congress can continue down this positive path forward with bipartisan cooperation and pass this important bill this year.

"The *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* embodies the bipartisan spirit that has gotten the bill to this point thanks to the leadership of Congresswoman Dingell and Congressman Fortenberry as well as the Senate sponsors. This spirit of cooperation and a focus on shared goals was responsible for carrying the bill through a positive vote in committee today and we look forward to working with our congressional leaders to get this bill across the finish line this year" said Tony Wasley, Director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife and President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "The bill would help expedite the recovery of thousands of at-risk species through proactive, collaborative conservation, and the economic value of that conservation to states and to taxpayers can't be overstated either."

"Right now, more than one-third of all wildlife species in the United States are at heightened risk of extinction—and demand immediate conservation action. The bipartisan *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* is the most significant piece of wildlife legislation since the *Endangered Species Act* passed in 1973," said Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. "Thanks to the incredible leadership of Rep. Debbie Dingell, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, Rep. Jared Huffman, Chair Raul Grijalva, and more than 150 additional bipartisan cosponsors, this historic bill is making critical bipartisan progress in the House and is showing that even in these divided times, wildlife conservation can bring all Americans together."

"The Committee passage of *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* is a direct result of the tireless efforts of Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) Co-Chair Congresswoman Dingell and CSC Member Congressman Fortenberry and their leadership in championing this monumental legislation," said CSF



President and CEO Jeff Crane. "This legislation is a smart, strategic effort to provide a desperately needed source of dedicated funding to address the 21st century conservation challenges facing our fish and wildlife managers today."

"Following decades of inequities in funding for Tribal fish and wildlife, NAFWS looks toward a future with dedicated annual base funding for Tribal fish and wildlife programs, said Native American Fish and Wildlife Society President, Elveda Martinez. "We thank Representative Dingell and the House Committee on Natural Resources for recognizing the value of Tribal conservation management."

The cost of inaction is unacceptably high. We need to start down a new path where we invest proactively in conservation rather than reacting to emergencies that cost taxpayers more than preventative measures like this one. We can't afford to allow more species to slip into the abyss of extinction, so let's roll up our sleeves and get this widely supported bill done and start to move the needle in the right direction for our wildlife.

Please visit OurNatureUSA.com and urge your U.S. Representative to support passage of the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* to address our biodiversity crisis and allow future generations to enjoy the same abundant fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities that we have today—for Our Nature, Our Nation and Our Future.

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About the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

The Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife formed in 2017 to secure funding for much needed conservation of our fish and wildlife resources. The Alliance was built upon the strong partnership created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources. The Alliance consists of members representing more than a trillion dollars of economic impact, millions of non-exportable jobs, and tens of millions of members and consumers across the country, all who rely on healthy fish and wildlife populations. Our goal is to partner with all Americans to conserve our precious fish and wildlife and natural heritage for future generations. Learn more at OurNatureUSA.com.

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