

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 20, 2025

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley,

We write to respectfully request your continued leadership and robust support for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program in the Fiscal Year 2026 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Now in its 25th year, the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program remains the nation's premier tool for preventing fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. We are grateful for the Subcommittee's longstanding bipartisan commitment to this program, including the \$72.4 million appropriated in FY2025. This federal investment enabled every state, territory, the District of Columbia, and numerous Tribal Nations to undertake science-based conservation projects that leveraged tens of millions in additional non-federal funding.

We urge you to provide the **highest possible funding level for the program in FY2026**. By enabling proactive conservation actions, the program saves taxpayer dollars by reducing the need for costly Endangered Species Act protections, while also minimizing regulatory conflict and achieving better ecological outcomes. It represents a smart, forward-looking investment in our nation's fish and wildlife.

The program supports work identified in State Wildlife Action Plans—comprehensive strategies developed by each state, territory, and the District of Columbia in collaboration with stakeholders, including conservation professionals, private landowners, Tribal governments, and the public. These plans guide actions to conserve over 12,000 *Species of Greatest Conservation Need* and include activities such as habitat restoration, invasive species management, disease control, species reintroduction, and critical monitoring and research.

The program also strengthens local economies. More than 100 million Americans participate in wildlife-related recreation such as hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, and photography. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$1.2 trillion in economic output, contributes 2.3% to GDP, and supports 5 million American jobs. Healthy fish and wildlife populations are the foundation of this economic engine.

Given its proven success, fiscal responsibility, and widespread public benefit, we urge you to make robust funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program a priority in FY2026.

Your leadership is essential to ensuring that current and future generations continue to enjoy the rich fish and wildlife heritage of the United States.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



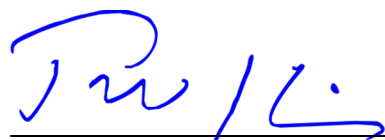
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



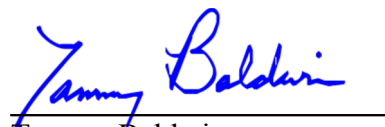
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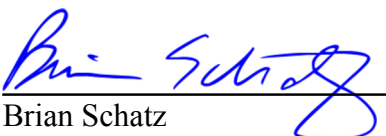
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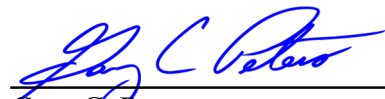
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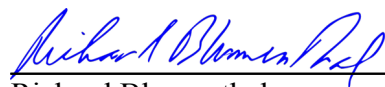
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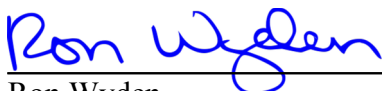
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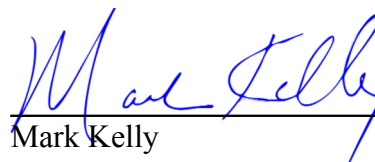
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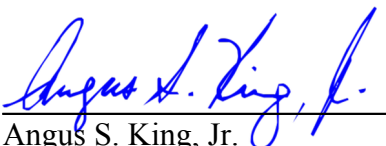
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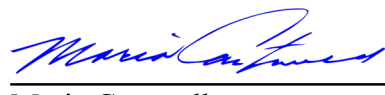
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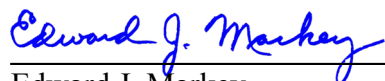
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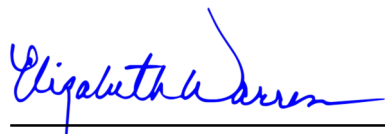
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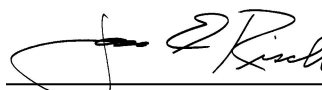
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