

Idaho Chapter, The Wildlife Society
c/o Fish & Wildlife Department
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844
April 4, 1995

Senator Dirk Kempthorne
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-1204

Dear Senator Kempthorne:

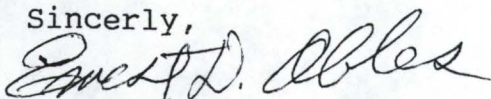
The enclosed sheet describes a Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative that has the strong endorsement of several national wildlife conservation organizations. The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society is solidly behind this initiative and at our recent business meeting the membership unanimously agreed that our congressional delegation should be informed of our position. I am happy to do this.

The Initiative aims to provide critically needed money for conservation and management of nongame species. Every state has a problem finding reliable funding for nongame programs. In Idaho this funding presently comes from voluntary sources which include state income tax checkoffs, special auto license plates and donations. Nongame funding in Idaho has declined by about 50 percent in recent years and we need a more reliable funding source such as the Initiative would provide.

The proposed Initiative would place a 5% surcharge on the wholesale cost of outdoor gear such as backpacks, sleeping bags, binoculars, backyard wildlife supplies, recreational vehicles, etc. It would be administered through an existing framework that handles Pittman-Robertson/Dingell-Johnson programs that collect taxes on guns & ammo and fishing tackle for allocation back to the states. An estimated \$350 million would be generated yearly and made available for nongame programs in the 50 states. It is important to note that this is a user fee and not a general tax on the population.

If I can provide additional information please do not hesitate to call or write.

Sincerely,



Ernest D. Ables, President

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