

Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society
c/o Fish and Wildlife Department
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844

29 Dec 1994

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Kempthorne:

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society. I wish to comment on the proposed federal funding cut in the U.S. Department of Interior, particularly the National Biological Survey (NBS) and its Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units.

The value of our nation's renewable natural resources cannot be questioned and I believe that Congress has always been an ardent supporter of conservation (the wise use of resources). These resources--wild plants and animals, soil, air, water, biological diversity--are the basis for our food supply, our wood and fiber supply, and myriad other benefits, both economic and aesthetic. Pressures continue to mount, however, to use these resources in nonsustainable ways and to dilute their capacity to produce things we need on a sustained basis. These pressures invariably cause conflict, fed by a lack of information.

Unfortunately the National Biological Survey is being seen as a culprit. The NBS did not create the issues that confront us, and to suggest the elimination of the NBS and its contained scientific expertise will not make problems disappear. In fact, the only way to help resolve the issues is to expand and support the good science produced by the NBS. The absence of sound applied research is a major impediment to resolving resource issues appropriately. Without this research we can expect more problems with environmental contamination, more conflicts with land owners, lower productivity of forests, rangelands, and waters; less profit for resource industries, unhealthy water and air, less stable employment and increased litigation.

I urge you to look carefully and objectively at the long-term value of scientific research in conservation and environmental areas before taking any action regarding either the size or organization of federal research organizations. These are highly significant programs that deserve your most studied attention.

Sincerely,

Ernest D. Ables, President