



IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

321 Ada Street
Boise, ID 8370
2 October 2000

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Trent Lott
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Gephardt
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Daschle
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leaders:

On behalf of the 250 members of the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society, I am writing to express our continued strong support for the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). CARA is landmark legislation, establishing for the first time dedicated, program-specific multi-year funding for conservation initiatives that will benefit every state and congressional district in the nation. Legislation that does not contain dedicated, program-specific multi-year funding, together with critical authorizing legislation, is not a substitute for CARA.

The compromise proposals we have seen this week from the Interior Appropriations Committee are not acceptable, and we still seek the real CARA this year. The Interior Appropriations conference agreement does not include discrete funding for state fish and wildlife programs. It places these programs in competition with other "state conservation programs" with appropriators having the power to allocate limited funds among such programs. The Interior Appropriations proposal does not guarantee multi-year funding for states. That is the entire premise of CARA. We need long-term conservation commitments.

CARA is the culmination of many years of effort that now includes over 5,000 businesses and non-profit organizations, governors, mayors and virtually all of our state natural resource agencies. Now, it appears its few opponents have avoided open debate by the Senate and the accompanying accountability by a last-minute deal to add short-term funding to the Interior Appropriations bill. Three hundred fifteen House members, 63 Senators, and President Clinton have publicly stated their support for the long-term, guaranteed protections of CARA. Americans who care about their environment, their urban parks, and their historical sites deserve a vote by the full Senate on CARA, not just a short-term, band-aid deal tacked on an appropriations bill at the last minute.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Harris, Ph.D.
President