



IDAHO CHAPTER, THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, 321 ADA STREET, BOISE, ID 83702

June 23, 2000

The Honorable Larry Craig
U.S. Senate
520 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Craig:

Members of the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society are very excited about the possibility of historic, bipartisan legislation that is being deliberated by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that will provide consistent and dedicated funding to our states to conserve fish and wildlife, protect and restore habitats, and meet the ever increasing public need for outdoor recreation opportunities. The Conservation and Reinvestment Act (S. 2123) and the Conservation and Stewardship Act (S. 2181) both work towards achieving these important goals.

The greatest need facing state fish and wildlife agencies is for a broad fish and wildlife program to serve our citizens and to avoid endangered species listings by taking measures early on to address the needs of declining species. A preventive approach is less costly and more effective than after-the-fact "emergency room" measures. Importantly, it enables states to work with private landowners in a non-regulatory, incentive-based manner. Funding from hunters' and anglers' user fees have successfully carried us this far, but additional funding is essential to implement such prevention programs in the next century. This has been our number one funding priority for over ten years, and we have worked hard to achieve the support of an extensive and broad coalition of wildlife and conservation interests.

We know you have concerns regarding private property rights and the federal portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (CARA Title II). We feel the private property rights issues have been adequately addressed in the current legislation and will protect those rights. Likewise, compromise language can be crafted to emphasize appropriate LWCF strategies in those western states with significant federal holdings, such as using conservation easements in lieu of fee title purchase. We urge you to work to resolve the remaining issues surrounding this legislation so that swift passage can be achieved this year. Idaho wildlife and its citizens have much to gain.

Your leadership is critical to passage of this legislation. The future of our nation's wildlife depends on you. We thank you in advance for your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles E. Harris". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Charles E. Harris
President