

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop:

We, the undersigned governors of The Great Lakes region, are pleased to offer our enthusiastic support for the bipartisan federal legislation entitled the “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.” This legislation provides a solution for one of America’s greatest threats—the decline of our fish and wildlife and their natural habitats, and what this means for people and our economy. One-third of fish and wildlife species in the United States are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered unless we proactively implement on-the-ground conservation measures. It costs the American public hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year to recover threatened and endangered species, costs that could be avoided or greatly reduced if we prevent fish and wildlife from needing these “emergency room” measures in the first place.

The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is built upon the premise that the best way to save America’s wildlife is through collaborative, proactive, and voluntary work before species are in trouble. This legislation will help conserve and recover our nation’s fish and wildlife by dedicating \$1.3 billion for state-level conservation and \$97.5 million to Tribal nations to recover and sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations. The funds will be used to accelerate the recovery of the more than 12,000 species of greatest conservation need across the country by implementing the strategies identified in each state’s Congressionally-mandated State Wildlife Action Plan. Similarly, tribal nations will expand conservation efforts on their lands, which provide vital habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species, including more than 500 species listed as threatened or endangered.

This is a non-regulatory approach to preventing further species listings under the Endangered Species Act. Taking measures to restore species before they are on the brink of extinction and ensuring healthy populations will save taxpayer resources and allow businesses and their community partners to operate with more regulatory certainty and reduced risk. This proactive approach to conservation is good for wildlife, good for people, and good for business.

Our nation has a remarkable history of coming together to bring species back from the brink of extinction by funding professional, science-driven fish and wildlife management. Eighty years ago, prized game species like elk, wood ducks, wild turkeys, and trout were at the cusp of being lost forever. Instead, hunters and anglers came together to leverage user fees for game species conservation because they understood that preserving wildlife takes coordinated, consistent investment in collaborative conservation.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act will represent the largest investment in conservation funding in more than a generation. This groundbreaking legislation will help ensure that future generations can enjoy the same abundant fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreation opportunities that we have today. While this bill is a federal policy initiative, its impacts and implementation will happen at the state level. Because of this, we fully support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and urge Congress to move quickly towards its passage.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to implement this legislation.

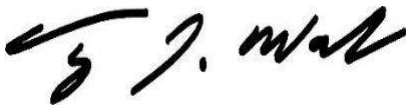
Sincerely,



Governor Gretchen Whitmer
State of Michigan




Governor JB Pritzker
State of Illinois



Governor Tim Walz
State of Minnesota



Governor Mike DeWine
State of Ohio



Governor Tom Wolf
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Governor Tony Evers
State of Wisconsin