

Senator Steve Daines
Chairman
Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry,
and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Michael Bennet
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry,
and Natural Resources
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

December 18, 2017

Dear Senator Daines and Senator Bennet,

The under-signed hunting and angling conservation, outdoor recreation, and scientific organizations extend our full support for your introduction of the Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act of 2017. Reauthorization of the Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) is a top Farm Bill priority for America's sportsmen and women, and we thank you for supporting this highly successful, state-led private lands access program.

VPA-HIP is the only program within the federal government designed to incentivize public recreational access on private lands. Since its reauthorization in the 2014 Farm Bill, wildlife agencies in 29 states and tribal lands have received \$40 million to expand public access and enhance wildlife habitat on more than 2.5 million acres. State wildlife agencies in Montana and Colorado have received \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million, respectively, to expand and improve their existing public access programs.

This legislation reauthorizes VPA-HIP at \$150 million over five years, a level reflecting the overall demand from state wildlife agencies as well as the economic benefits of the program. A recent study from the first year of program funding found an estimated 99 percent return on taxpayer investment through increased consumer spending. This spending directly supports thousands of jobs in the \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy, which helps catalyze rural economies nationwide.

We thank you for supporting this important priority for sportsmen and women across the country, and we look forward to working with you to ensure successful inclusion of this legislation in the next Farm Bill.

Sincerely,
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone & Crockett Club
California Waterfowl Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Delta Waterfowl
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America

Mule Deer Foundation
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Deer Alliance
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Outdoor Industry Association
Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
Safari Club International
Texas Wildlife Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wildlife Society
Trout Unlimited
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi
Wild Sheep Foundation