

# **Committee on Resources**

## **Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans**

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### **Witness Statement**

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The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Co-Chairman Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Statement on H.R. 4790 ,the Hunting Heritage Protection Act  
July 20, 2000

Mr. Chairman, I am here today in support of H.R. 4790, the Hunting Heritage Protection Act.

I am the Democratic cochair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, which has as its principle mission "To preserve and promote the traditional rights of American citizens to hunt, fish and pursue outdoor activities."

The right to fish was strengthened in 1995 by an Executive Order that required federal agencies to encourage and improve recreational fishing opportunities where it is practicable.

The time has come to afford the right to hunt the same protection, by requiring federal agencies to promote and enhance hunting opportunities where appropriate; by ensuring access to federal lands by hunters; and by preventing any further loss of wildlife habitat due to federal action or development.

There are those in this country who would like to cut off access to all federal land by sportsmen. This kind of thinking ignores the contribution sportsmen have made to this country's natural resources.

Well before "environmentalism" became popular, sportsmen were on the forefront of conserving and protecting wildlife and its habitat. It still remains an undisputed fact today that no one contributes more to preserving our wild areas than sportsmen.

This legislation simply recognizes that contribution, and ensures that future generations of sportsmen will benefit from the efforts begun by their fore fathers. I would like to associate myself with the thoughtful testimony of my colleague Mr. Chambliss, and ask you to support the Hunting Heritage Protection Act.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to share the insightful wisdom of Teddy Roosevelt:

"In a civilized and cultivated country wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen. The excellent people who protest against all hunting and consider sportsmen as enemies of wildlife (do not understand) the fact that in reality the genuine sportsman is, by all odds, the most important factor in keeping the larger and more valuable wild creatures from total extermination."

Thank you very much.

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