



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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September 8, 2017

Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Congressman Grijalva:

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) strongly supports HR 3668 and urges your expeditious action to report the bill to the full House. Founded in 1902, the Association's mission remains to protect the authority of the state fish and wildlife agencies to manage fish and wildlife within their borders, including on federal lands and waters. We strive to work cooperatively with the federal agencies to deliver science-based, sustainable management of fish and wildlife resources for the use and enjoyment of our citizens. All 50 states are members of the Association.

This is the third Congress which has tried to pass a bipartisan package of bills to benefit fish and wildlife conservation and the citizens of our Nation, including hunters, anglers, recreational shooters and other wildlife enthusiasts. The portfolio of separate bills bundled in the package has changed, but all of the bills focus on fish, wildlife and habitat conservation; enhancing access to federal lands for hunting, angling, recreational shooting and other wildlife dependent-recreation; increasing opportunities to engage in these activities; and clarifying federal authorities in these arenas. These bipartisan sportsmen's bills are strongly supported by the fish, wildlife, hunting, and fishing conservation community. While different groups may assign different priorities to the component bills, our community supports the bundled package of bills represented in HR 3668.

The Association is particularly appreciative of the inclusion of Title XIX, Respect for State Wildlife Management Authority. This title reaffirms and highlights the existing authority of the states to manage fish and wildlife within their borders, including on federal lands and waters. It is jurisdictionally neutral and neither enlarges nor diminishes the existing authorities of state and federal agencies in this area. It also directs the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to cooperate with the states, and to utilize state fish and wildlife agencies' data and analyses when planning, developing and implementing land management plans for the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and US Fish and Wildlife Service lands. This brings consistency to the existing policy of many federal land management units which has not been consistently applied nationwide. The federal agencies will now have explicit Congressional direction to utilize state data and analyses. We strongly support and enthusiastically appreciate these provisions in Title XIX.

Thank you for your attention to the Association's perspectives and we stand ready to assist you in reporting HR 3668 favorably to the House floor. Please contact Jen Mock Schaeffer, Government Affairs Director, at jenmock@fishwildlife.org if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Nick Wiley
President