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SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUSES**

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February 15, 2017

Dear Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Leaders:

The National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) Executive Council represents a bipartisan coalition of more than 2,000 state legislators dedicated to working on behalf of our millions of sportsmen and women constituents by protecting and advancing our nation's outdoor heritage. On behalf of the Executive Council, I write to express our strong support for HJ Res. 69, introduced by Congressman Don Young of Alaska. If passed, this resolution would nullify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) final rule "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska" (81 Fed Reg. 52248 (August 5, 2016)).

As adopted by the FWS, this rule boldly preempts the authority of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage wildlife for both recreational and subsistence hunting on National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs), functionally ignoring the state's management authority as affirmed by Congress in the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. Additionally, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act states that hunting and fishing-related activities are one of six priority general public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The current rule ignores this directive, instead opting for a "hands-off" approach that ignores input provided by the State of Alaska and undermines the critically important role that state fish and wildlife agencies play in conserving public trust resources, including those on federal lands.

The sustainable management of fish and wildlife resources must be led by the State while working in cooperation with the FWS. The passage of HJ Res. 69 will restore the state-federal jurisdictional balance for wildlife management while respecting existing statutes.

We urge you, as members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, to protect the balance between state and federal wildlife management agencies by supporting HJ Res. 69.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Representative Brandon Phelps (D-IL)
President, NASC Executive Council