

Committee on Resources

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM HARTWIG

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS
REGARDING H.R. 3433, TO TRANSFER THE MINGO JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTER
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MAY 13, 2004

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Administration's views on H.R. 3433, a bill to transfer the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. I am William Hartwig, Assistant Director of the National Wildlife Refuge System, for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

H.R. 3433 would transfer management and operational responsibility of the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center, located on the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri, from the FWS to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), in the Department of Agriculture. In doing so, the legislation would also transfer administrative jurisdiction of approximately 89 acres at the refuge from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture. The bill includes language that would ensure the transfer of all federal employees associated with the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center from FWS to the USFS, and a reversionary clause has been included, whereby if the Job Corps Center were ever to close, the land it occupies would be reverted back to FWS (if deemed suitable by the Secretary of the Interior). H.R. 3433 would not change the Secretary of Labor's role or authority regarding this Job Corps Center. The Administration supports this legislation because it will result in cost savings to the American public. Administered by the Department of Labor, Job Corps is a national network of residential and nonresidential centers providing intensive education and training services to help address the multiple barriers to employment faced by at-risk youth between the ages of 16 to 24. The training it provides helps students develop the necessary skills to be successful in today's job market. Civilian Conservation Centers are operated on public land under agreements between the Department of Labor and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. In addition to other training and assistance, these Centers provide programs of work-based learning to conserve, develop, manage, or enhance public national resources or related facilities, or to develop community projects in the public interest.

FWS currently administers two Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, one in Missouri (Mingo), which is the object of this legislation, and the other in Oklahoma (Treasure Lake). The Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center in Puxico, Missouri, employs 76 Federal employees and has a student capacity of 224. The Treasure Lake Job Corps Center in Indianola, Oklahoma, employs 57 Federal employees and has a student capacity of 236.

In 2002, FWS determined that it needed to reallocate the over \$100,000 in overhead it spends annually from its own budget to support the operations of the Mingo Jobs Corps Center to priority activities consistent with the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System. FWS determined it was not feasible to operate and administer the Job Corps program even though the Department of Labor provides for the base operating costs of the program. FWS then began working with the Department of Labor to explore other alternatives for management and operation of the Mingo and Treasure Lake Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers and determined that the best option was to transfer the Centers from FWS to USFS.

USFS is well suited to manage the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center because the agency currently oversees or administers 18 Job Corps Centers throughout the country and, as a result, has the ability to spread its overhead costs across a large Job Corps program. We also understand that USFS is mindful that the use of public-private competitions, consistent with the President's Management Agenda, will enhance the long-term performance of its Job Corps Centers. We believe the Mingo Job Corps Center would be enhanced by using public-private competition as a resource tool for improving the Center's performance and potentially further decreasing costs to taxpayers in the future.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. I would be pleased to respond to any questions.