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H. Dale Hall
Memphis, Tennessee

September 25, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

I write in support of HR 6013, the Migratory Bird Framework and Hunting Opportunities for Veterans Act. HR 6013 will allow January 31st of each year as the closing date for duck hunting season frameworks and allow states to establish special duck hunting days for veterans and active military personnel. I was honored to provide our perspective on this legislation during testimony this past July. Since that time, Chairman Bishop and his colleagues on the House Committee on Natural Resources have worked diligently with many stakeholders, including Ducks Unlimited (DU), to clarify and improve the language in the bill.

DU firmly believes that individual states should have flexibility to set dates that are within the season frameworks, established through the science-based, annual dialogue between the Flyway Councils and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regulations Committee, and that the latest season closing date should be no later than January 31. This date remains consistent with the long-standing system of Adaptive Harvest Management. Given that available science suggests current rates of harvest do not significantly impact waterfowl populations, DU is comfortable and supportive of this language that would allow states to choose January 31 as a closing date of the hunting season for ducks, mergansers and coots. To be clear, this proposed change to the framework will not require any state to change its season dates. That decision will remain vested with the states and Flyway Councils.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), is a longstanding trilateral agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico that joins these three nations in working together to manage our shared continental migratory bird resources. This plan, which serves as a roadmap for DU's continental conservation work, highlights the role of people in sustaining waterfowl populations for future generations. Simply put, waterfowl hunters invest significant time, effort and funding to support these resources. To maintain and build support for waterfowl and wetlands conservation, the waterfowl management community is investing significant funds to recruit, retain and reactivate waterfowl hunters. This important effort, termed "R3" will help sustain these vital resources for years to come. One of the best ways to do this is to provide additional opportunities for people to get into the field. We believe that this bill will encourage our veterans

and active military to get into the fields, marshes and woods. However, DU believes that the authority to designate these special seasons and days remain vested with the state fish and wildlife agencies.

Thus, we support allowing the states, through the established Flyway Council system, to expand and define special hunting opportunities for these heroes in a way that makes the most sense in each state. I believe this approach will promote states' authority in a way to address the desires of many sportsmen and women and help maintain the number of hunters engaged in our rich waterfowl hunting heritage, while simultaneously keeping the NAWMP commitments to sustaining waterfowl populations and habitats.

In closing, we support states having the flexibility to end the waterfowl season on January 31st or earlier if they desire, and we support states having the flexibility to designate special hunting opportunities for our military and veterans. These two aspects of HR 6013 will help continue the rich heritage of waterfowl hunting and conservation of our treasured wetland resources for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Dale Hall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

H. Dale Hall
CEO, Ducks Unlimited, Inc
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Retired)