

**STATEMENT OF SCOTT SUTHERLAND, DUCKS UNLIMITED
DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS OFFICE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INSULAR AFFAIRS, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE**

MAY 6, 2010

CONCERNING:

H.R. 3805, TO AMEND THE ELECTRONIC DUCK STAMP ACT OF 2005

Ducks Unlimited (DU) is pleased to testify before the Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife, in support of H.R. 3805, a bill to amend the Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005 (the Act) to extend by 2 years the electronic duck stamp pilot program.

I am the Director of the Governmental Affairs Office of Ducks Unlimited, a non-profit wetlands conservation organization. In my role, I lead our organization's efforts to educate and advocate on behalf of national conservation policy initiatives to benefit the waterfowl resource.

H.R. 3805: Amending the Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005

Since its introduction in 1934, the Federal Duck Stamp has generated well over \$750 million, which has been used to purchase or lease over 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the United States. These lands are now protected in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System.

In 2005, the Act was passed to make it easier for federal duck stamps to be sold to the public. These stamps are not always available at small post offices and even some larger ones, and are sometimes difficult for waterfowl hunters and collectors to purchase over the counter. The Act allows for purchase on the internet or by phone and the purchaser is given a special receipt valid for up to 45 days. This delay allows the USFWS sufficient time to mail a physical stamp to the purchaser.

DU was supportive of the Act, and of the move to make federal duck stamps easier to purchase. We have concerns that if a physical stamp was not issued to the purchaser, the value of the federal stamps as collector's items and as tradition would be lost. This loss of value did occur to some state stamps when they were made available electronically, and the tradition and artistic value of the federal duck stamp program is too strong to risk losing. This has not happened, however, to the federal stamp, thanks to the fulfillment requirement of the Act.

The Act as pilot trial legislation has worked. Federal stamps are available instantly over the internet and yet due to the requirement of fulfillment, it has not made the stamp just a novelty item. Because of its success in making federal duck stamps easier to obtain while preserving the heritage and utility of the traditional stamps and attendant art, Ducks Unlimited supports the enactment of H.R. 3805, to extend by two years the trial period of the electronic duck stamp pilot program.