

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies • Boone & Crockett Club • Dallas Safari Club • Texas Wildlife Association • Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership • The Wildlife Society • Whitetails Unlimited • Wildlife Forever • Wildlife Management Institute • Wild Sheep Foundation • Pope and Young Club • National Wildlife Federation • Trout Unlimited • American Sportfishing Association • Federation of Fly Fishers

August 4, 2009

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Chairman, Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Federal Lands and Resources Energy Development Act Discussion Draft

Dear Chairman Rahall:

The groups below represent millions of hunters, anglers, fish and wildlife professionals, and outdoor enthusiasts. We thank you and your staff for your thoughtful Federal Lands and Resources Energy Development Act Discussion Drafts. While some of our individual organizations have submitted more detailed comments on the full extent of your first discussion draft, and many will on the second draft, we would like to focus these comments on the disposition of potential receipts derived from moving solar and wind energy from a special use/rights-of-way permit to a process of competitive leasing, as well as making uranium a leaseable mineral.

President Obama and Secretary of the Interior Salazar have made clear their intention to accelerate development of renewable energy resources on public lands. The hunting and angling community is supportive of responsible increases in renewable energy production from public lands. That said, we remain determined to protect fish and wildlife, water resources, and hunting and fishing that may suffer from the impacts of poorly planned development on public lands, or the lack of sufficient resources for mitigation, monitoring, and adaptive management to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat.

While we continue to seek better planning and practices to protect habitat on public lands where oil and gas development is underway, we should also be careful of the cumulative impacts that renewable energy development will have. Avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts to fish and wildlife habitat associated with energy development of any form is essential to maintaining the flow of billions of dollars generated from hunting, fishing, and wildlife related recreation in New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, California, Idaho, and other public land states.

The discussion draft wisely institutes leasing and royalties for renewable energy development on public lands. It is vital that state and federal agencies have the resources necessary to properly manage energy development. Thousands of miles of transmission lines may be needed to move renewable energy to market. Funding must be made available to avoid fish and wildlife damage and for mitigation and restoration.

We understand your desire to create an ocean trust fund based on royalties associated with off-shore development, and support the full funding of the state and federal objectives of open space acquisition, easements of sensitive lands, hunting and angling access, and other priorities of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We are writing today in support of creating a third leg of the conservation funding stool to ensure that states have the resources to monitor and manage the effects of energy development, and that funds are made available to mitigate the effects of development on fish wildlife, and other affected resources and communities.

The staff discussion drafts do much to institute a fair, responsible program for the development of renewable energy on public lands, and to administer uranium mining. By creating the third leg of conservation funding described above, you can help ensure that fish, wildlife, and local communities thrive alongside increased renewable energy development. Thank you and your staff for your efforts on this issue, and for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

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