

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 2, 2008

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Interior, Environment, and Related  
Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Wayne Allard, Ranking  
Interior, Environment, and Related  
Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Allard:

We write in strong support of our National Wildlife Refuge System and ask that you provide a modest increase in funding for FY2009 for the management of this American treasure. Thank you for your strong leadership in providing a critically needed increase for the operations and maintenance of the Refuge System in the FY 2008 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The \$434.1 million funding level included in the final FY 2008 bill was a significant down payment in putting the Refuge System on the road to recovery. We respectfully ask you that you continue that leadership and provide an increase to \$514 million for the Refuge System in the FY 2009 Interior appropriations bill.

The Refuge System is our nation's wildlife trust, forming our core commitment to maintaining wildlife diversity and abundance for future generations. Nearly 40 million Americans enjoy visiting the Refuge System each year, and their travel and recreation generates \$1.7 billion in sales to regional economies, and creates more than 27,000 jobs and \$543 million in employment income. Our Refuge System is the premier wildlife system in the world, although accumulating debts are putting this national treasure at risk—the Refuge System faces an operations and maintenance backlog in excess of \$3 billion and a devastating 20 percent cut in staff.

An investment in the Refuge System is sorely needed to keep our long-standing commitment to the national network of wildlife conservation lands first envisioned by President Theodore Roosevelt and recently affirmed in the passage of the bipartisan 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement issued a 2007 report, "*Restoring America's Wildlife Legacy*," that concluded the annual operations and maintenance budget should total \$765 million by FY 2013 to adequately fund the Refuge System. As a result, we believe that an investment of \$514 million for our Refuge System is a prudent allocation of resources and we encourage you to provide this level of support in the FY2009 Interior appropriations bill.

We stand ready to work with you to ensure this important federal lands system is maintained for the American public. Again, thank you for your leadership in supporting and safeguarding our National Wildlife Refuge System.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold



Olympia J. Snowe

Jon Lick

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Dick Swain

John F. Kerry

Olewis Damm

Herb Kohl

Newy

Bar Sanders

Maria Cantwell

Robert Mendenhall

John Reed

Allen Spector  
FY '09 WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

John Z. Sauer

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Carl Levin

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Edward M. Kennedy

Susan Collins

Chuck Schumer

Frank R. Lautenberg

Ben Boper

John Johnson

Debbie Stabenow

Janice Keata

John Thorne

Robert A. Mihalchik

Ben Cardin

Bill Nelson

Noah Coleman

Mike Cryso

Bob

Jim Webb

Ken Salazar

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Senators signing FY09 Wildlife Refuge letter:

Russell D. Feingold  
Olympia J. Snowe  
Joseph I. Lieberman  
Jack Reed  
Jeff Bingaman  
Arlen Specter  
Richard J. Durbin  
John Warner  
John F. Kerry  
Hilary Rodham Clinton  
Christopher J. Dodd  
Carl Levin  
Herb Kohl  
Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
Ron Wyden  
Edward M. Kennedy  
Bernard Sanders  
Susan M. Collins

Maria Cantwell  
Charles E. Schumer  
Robert Menendez  
Frank R. Lautenberg  
Barbara Boxer  
Tim Johnson  
Debbie Stabenow  
Daniel K. Akaka  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
Barbara A. Mikulski  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
Bill Nelson  
Norm Coleman  
Mike Crapo  
Barack Obama  
Jim Webb  
Ken Salazar