

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 7, 2010

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

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment, and Related
Agencies
Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

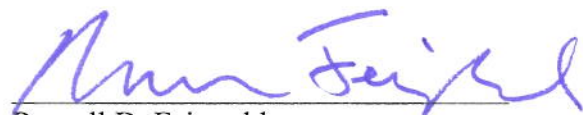
Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

We write in strong support of our National Wildlife Refuge System and ask that you provide a modest increase in funding for FY2011 for the management of this American treasure. With your leadership, critically needed increases in funding for the operations and maintenance of the Refuge System were provided in FY 2009 and FY 2010. The \$503.3 million funding level included in the final FY 2010 bill was a significant advance in putting the Refuge System on the road to recovery. While we understand the tough economic times and applaud the President's efforts to trim the budget, we respectfully ask that you continue efforts to reduce the backlog in the National Wildlife Refuge System by increasing funding for FY 2011.

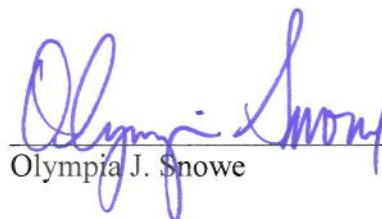
The Refuge System is our nation's wildlife trust, forming our core commitment to maintaining wildlife diversity and abundance for future generations. Over 41 million Americans enjoy visiting the Refuge System each year, and their travel and recreation generate \$1.7 billion in sales to regional economies, and create 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 operation and maintenance backlog of \$3.7 billion and has lost over 10% of its workforce since 2004.

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. We believe that a modest increase in funding for our Refuge System is a prudent allocation of resources and we encourage you to provide this support in the FY2011 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 Lint

Bob
Jeanne Shaker

Mary Landrum

Debbie Stensow

Ben Cudi

Daniel K. Spaka

Tom Kampfer

Dick Durbin

Richard W. Davis

Paul Boych

Jack Paul
John Stone

Herb Kohl

Bob Sanders

Th. W.

Jim Johnson

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Bobby Byrd

Carl Levin

Chris Dodd

Russell D. Feingold
Olympia J. Snowe
Joseph I. Lieberman
Jack Reed
Jeff Bingaman
Sheldon Whitehouse
Jeanne Shaheen
Herb Kohl
Mary L. Landrieu
Bernard Sanders
Debbie Stabenow
Ron Wyden
Benjamin L. Cardin
Tim Johnson
Daniel K. Akaka
Jeffrey A. Merkley
Ted Kaufman
Barbara Boxer
Dick Durbin
Carl Levin
Roland W. Burris
Chris Dodd
Mark Begich