

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) A Bold Vision for Funding Wildlife Conservation

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will redirect \$1.3 billion of existing revenue annually to state-led wildlife conservation efforts, effectively allowing the states to more fully implement their wildlife conservation plans. This legislation follows the recommendation of a diverse group of energy, business, and conservation leaders. This group, known as the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, determined that an annual investment of \$1.3 billion in revenues from energy and mineral development on federal lands and waters could address the needs of thousands of species, preventing them from needing to be added to the Endangered Species Act.

RAWA must be inclusive of tribal wildlife conservation needs and incorporate tribal values, concerns, and priorities, while providing resources for tribes to meet their wildlife conservation goals.

Facts about RAWA:

- **NO TAX INCREASE** — The \$1.3 billion will come from existing revenues from energy and mineral fees on federal lands and waters. This is a small portion of the overall revenues from these sources.
- **BETTER FOR HUNTERS AND ANGLERS** — Currently 80 percent of the funding for our state wildlife agencies comes from sportsmen's fees such as hunting and fishing licenses and taxes on outdoor gear. Wildlife that are not hunted or fished do not currently have a similar dedicated funding stream.
- **A PROVEN MECHANISM** — The bill will allocate funds via the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration subaccount of the Pittman-Robertson Act, which was originally passed in 1937.
- **LOCAL CONTROL** — The funds from this bill will be controlled by tribal and state fish and wildlife agencies.
- **A HISTORY OF SUCCESS** — Tribal and state fish and wildlife agencies have had great successes in restoring species once on the brink—bison, bald eagles, white-tailed deer, elk, turkey, striped bass, and more.
- **HELPING WILDLIFE AT RISK** — The money will largely be spent on efforts such as restoring habitats, reintroducing native wildlife, fighting invasive species, and monitoring emerging diseases.
- **CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE** — States can use some of the funds for wildlife viewing, nature photography, educational programs, and trail improvements.

This legislation must be inclusive of Tribes.

There is a long and sad history of Tribes being excluded from wildlife conservation funding or only being provided a nominal amount of support. For instance, Tribes are not eligible for Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration funding, despite the fact that our tribal members pay the taxes that fund these programs and many non-tribal recreationists visit

our lands and communities to hunt and fish. Despite the history of underfunding and tribal exclusion, Tribes have some of the most accomplished natural resource programs in the nation and protect hundreds upon hundreds of wildlife species and their habitat. Funding through the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) or other similar legislation meant to recover wildlife species must be inclusive of Tribes and resources must be dedicated to assist Tribes with their wildlife conservation efforts.

Tribal lands and waters are essential for wildlife conservation. Conservation opportunities on Tribal lands overshadow any other non-public land conservation opportunity. Tribes own and influence the management of a natural resource base of nearly 140 million acres, including more than 730,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs, over 10,000 miles of streams and rivers, and over 18 million acres of forested lands. Tribal lands provide vital habitat for more than 525 federally-listed threatened and endangered plants and animals, many of which are both ecologically and culturally significant to Tribes. Tribes are proven leaders in the protection of these landscapes and their wildlife that provides a model and lessons for other natural resource managers.