



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington D.C. 20240



March 31, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman,

I write in response to your March 14, 2023, letter regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) support for employee training and career development programs that support the work of dedicated natural resource professionals in accomplishing the Service's important mission. We appreciate your interest in this important topic.

The Service has a workforce of over 8,000 employees stationed across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and many U.S. territories, as well as nearly a dozen countries globally. Our employees are dedicated professionals and committed public servants who serve as leaders and trusted partners in fish and wildlife conservation throughout the world. To meet our responsibility of supporting the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the American people, ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of those employees is a top priority of the Service. The Service has found that investing in our employees helps them be more productive in carrying out their day-to-day duties in support of the Service's mission on behalf of the American people. Providing resources to support employee health, safety, and wellness also enables the Service to recruit and retain an effective and dedicated workforce.

Certain of the Service's regional offices have on occasion offered access to a limited number of voluntary, virtual workshops titled "Acknowledging Ecological Grief and Building Resiliency." These voluntary workshops met a request from a number of Service employees seeking assistance in managing work-related stress. The workshops were conducted by outside consultants, approved on a case-by-case basis by leadership in the Service's regional offices and supported through base funds set aside for general employee training and development. Since 2021, the Service's regional offices offered their employees access to six such workshops, with a total cost of \$11,600. Copies of invoices received by the Service in connection with these workshops accompany this response. No additional workshops are currently planned.

If you or your staff would like to follow up on this or any other matter, please contact me or Perrin Cooke, Oversight Counsel with the U.S. Department of the Interior at perrin_cooke@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

Martha Williams
Director