



January 19, 2021

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman,

In advance of your Committee's legislative hearing on Thursday, January 20, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) would like to express our support H.R. 5973, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2021, and our opposition to H.R. 4716, the Refuge From Cruel Trapping Act of 2021.

Support for H.R. 5973 – the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2021

First, CSF expresses our appreciation to Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Co-Chair Representative Debbie Dingell for her steadfast commitment to America's sportsmen and women. CSF applauds Congresswoman Dingell for championing H.R. 5973, which seeks to reauthorize the proven and successful Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (GLFWRA) of 1990 through Fiscal Year 2027. Since her time in Congress, Congresswoman Dingell has been the leading advocate for GLFWRA, including the program's most recent reauthorization in 2016.

Specifically, GLFWRA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provides federal funding to work collaboratively with states, tribes, and other federal agencies "to develop and implement proposals for the restoration of fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin and to provide assistance to Great Lakes fish and wildlife agencies to encourage cooperative conservation, restoration, and management of the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats."

First authorized in 1990, GLFWRA authorizes \$6 million annually to conduct fish and wildlife restoration projects that is leveraged with 25% non-federal matching funds for any given conservation project. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, since 1998, GLFWRA has provided approximately \$31 million in federal funds to 185 research, restoration, and regional conservation projects. These projects include: waterfowl monitoring, wetland restoration, culvert improvement, dam removal, among many other important conservation efforts.

For these reasons, CSF is strongly supportive of H.R. 5973, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2021.

Opposition to H.R. 4716 – Refuge From Cruel Trapping Act of 2021

The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation strongly opposes H.R. 4716, the Refuge From Cruel Trapping Act of 2021, which seeks to ban the use of traps within the National Wildlife Refuge System for the general public.

H.R. 4716 is nothing short of an emotionally driven piece of legislation that fails to account for the ecological and societal benefits of wildlife trapping, in addition to the increased expense that would occur from having employee’s manage furbearing populations such as a beaver that can destroy wildlife refuge infrastructure like roads and dykes. Wildlife trapping maintains wide-spread support from the wildlife-science community, including from the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians and the American Veterinary Medical Association, among others. The Wildlife Society, the nation’s leading wildlife professional organization, maintains that “Regulated trapping in North America is consistent with internationally accepted principles of natural resource conservation stipulating the maintenance of essential ecological processes, preservation of genetic diversity, and the continued existence of species and ecosystems.”, which includes regulated trapping by the licensed public.

While H.R. 4716 includes an exemption for the Federal Government to use trapping to control invasive species under Section 10(a) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the bill fails to account for the important role played by licensed individuals of the public in wildlife management through wildlife trapping by simply removing them from the equation. The bill contradicts the position of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who states: “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) also views trapping as a legitimate recreational and economic activity when there are harvestable surpluses of fur-bearing mammals”. The Service, along with state fish and wildlife agencies, often relies on licensed individuals from the public to conduct trapping efforts within the National Wildlife Refuge System to ensure healthy and sustainable populations of wildlife that cannot be efficiently managed through methods other than trapping.

It is also important to note that wildlife trapping is one of the most highly regulated, sustainable, science-based conservation practices in the world. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) regularly updates its Furbearer Management and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping Program to ensure that trapping is conducted in a manner that is safe, humane, and most importantly, consistent with the best available science. These BMPs, developed for each furbearer species, are crucial to the sustainability and ethicality of wildlife trapping. Furthermore, trap manufacturing industries have voluntarily embraced the recommendations of the BMPs and have designed and resigned new traps to meet the standards identified in trapping BMPs.

The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation maintains that professional wildlife management and its related activities, including trapping, must be guided by science, not emotion or a predetermined agenda. By removing trapping from the landscape within the National Wildlife System, H.R. 4716 ignores the position of not only CSF, but the leading wildlife-science

professionals, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For these reasons, we strongly oppose this piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Crane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Jeff Crane
President and CEO