

Speech for Hearing on H.R. 925 North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act (NAWCA)

Congressman Mike Thompson
Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Jared Huffman, Chair
24 September 2019 2:00pm

Good afternoon. Chairman Huffman, thank you for your continued leadership and your dedication to preserving our water, oceans, and wildlife. Thank you to the Committee for this hearing on my legislation, H.R. 925, the North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the important and lasting effects of this bill.

As a member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, I have the privilege of evaluating and approving NAWCA-funded projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. As chairman of the Congressional Land Conservation Caucus and a lifelong hunter and outdoorsman, I feel a strong sense of responsibility to ensure that everyone in America can use and enjoy the natural resources that belong to all of us.

Since 1989, North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants have funded close to three thousand projects, carried out by more than six thousand partners. These federal grants require a 1:1 non-federal match, and over the past 30 years, 1.6 billion dollars in federal funding has been matched more than 3:1, with 4.7 billion dollars contributed by non-federal partners.

The result so far has been 29.8 million acres—an area the size of Pennsylvania—of rehabilitated and restored wetlands. These wetlands support ecological health and biodiversity while providing outstanding opportunities for Americans to bird-watch, hunt, fish, hike, farm, and ranch. H.R. 925 reauthorizes NAWCA so we can continue this critical work on North America's wetlands.

It is an honor that my NAWCA bill is being heard alongside so many other important pieces of bipartisan legislation that together will ensure that we continue to protect birds and other wildlife by conserving the public lands that allow them to thrive, on behalf of all Americans now and for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.