



LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

July 16, 2003

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Amendments to FY 2004 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

Dear Representative,

The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is the political voice of the national environmental community. Each year, LCV publishes the *National Environmental Scorecard*, which details the voting records of Members of Congress on environmental legislation. The *Scorecard* is distributed to LCV members, concerned voters nationwide, and the press.

When the FY 2004 Interior and related agencies appropriations bill reaches the House floor this week, LCV urges you to oppose any anti-environment amendments to the bill. **LCV also urges you to support the following amendments to the FY2004 Interior Appropriations bill:**

- Amendments to Restore the Conservation Trust Fund. The Appropriations Committee has proposed cutting this groundbreaking bipartisan accomplishment by over \$500 million, crippling the ability of states and communities to protect valuable wildlife and open space, and preventing the federal government from adding lands to our national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. Amendments to the bill would restore the Conservation Trust Fund towards its dedicated Interior bill level of \$1.56 billion.
- Inslee (D-WA) Amendment to Protect Roadless National Forest Areas. The Forest Service has announced its intentions to eliminate protections for roadless areas in Alaska's national forests – the Tongass and the Chugach – and to allow other states to opt out of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. This landmark conservation measure is the most popular rule in history, protecting 58 million acres of our wildest national forest lands and protecting clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. This amendment will preserve the rule as issued for FY 2004.
- Udall (D-CO) Amendment to Stop the Giveaway of America's Public Lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has revived a law repealed by Congress 26 years ago to allow special interests and local jurisdictions to claim thousands of miles of rights-of-way, including cow paths and stream bottoms, across unroaded federal lands. Such action will promote private development of our public lands and disqualify once wild places from future wilderness protection. National treasures at risk include Colorado's Dinosaur National Park, California's Mojave National Preserve, Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and millions of acres of wilderness quality lands in Utah's red rock canyon country. This amendment would prohibit this massive giveaway of our public lands.
- Holt (D-NJ)-Rahall (D-WV)-Shays (R-CT)-Johnson (R-IL) Amendment to Protect Yellowstone National Park from Pollution. The current National Park Service (NPS) plan for snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park would increase pollution, noise, and threats to wildlife. After ten years of studies, the NPS and Environmental Protection Agency stated that phasing out snowmobile use in favor of snowcoaches is the best way to protect the Park. This amendment would reduce air pollution and engine noise and protect human health and sensitive wildlife by phasing out snowmobile use.
- Blumenauer (D-OR)-Thompson (D-CT)-Shays (R-CT) Amendment to Protect Fish and Wildlife in the Klamath River Basin. The Fish and Wildlife Service has abandoned previous plans to conserve water and reduce the use of toxic pesticides on National Wildlife Refuges in the Klamath River Basin. This reversal will lead to significant harm to the environment and wildlife. This amendment will prohibit

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crops on the wildlife refuges that heavily consume water, use particularly toxic pesticides, and provide no benefit to wildlife.

- Rahall (D-WV) Amendment to Protect Wild Buffalo in Yellowstone National Park. Last winter the National Park Service captured 231 Yellowstone buffalo and sent them to slaughter. This amendment will stop the Park Service and Forest Service from slaughtering this American icon, the living link to the last 25 buffalo remaining in the Park after the near extermination of American's buffalo at the turn of the century. The amendment will force these agencies to consider management tools other than lethal methods to resolve the alleged conflict between buffalo and cattle on federal lands adjacent to and in Yellowstone National Park.
- Udall (D-NM) Amendment to Uphold Strong National Forest Management. The Forest Service has proposed a sweeping revision of regulations implementing the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) without any input from scientists. The proposal would weaken safeguards for wildlife, eliminate environmental review, limit citizen participation, and reduce the role of science and monitoring. This amendment will leave sound regulations adopted under President Reagan in 1982 in place.

LCV also urges you to oppose any attempt to strike section 335 from the bill. This bipartisan provision would temporarily suspend the massive effort underway to privatize many jobs that are essential to safeguarding the treasures in our national parks, national forests, and other public lands so that Congress can develop a better understanding of the costs and consequences of privatizing the important work performed by scientists, archeologists, architects, curators, engineers, fire fighters, and laborers. The protection of our national treasures is an inherent responsibility of the federal government and should not be placed in the hands of the lowest bidder without regard for the impact on future generations.

LCV's Political Advisory Committee will consider including votes on these issues in compiling LCV's 2003 *Scorecard*. For more information, please call Betsy Loyless or Mary Minette at 202/785-8683.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Callahan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Deb Callahan
President