



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

ALASKA CHAPTER

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society strives to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources in Alaska for the benefit of society.



December 24, 2018

The Honorable Don Young
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young:

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society we are requesting your support for **Recovering America's Wildlife Act** ([H.R. 4647](#)).

Introduced by Representatives Fortenberry (R-NE) and Dingell (D-MI) in December 2017 and currently cosponsored by more than 114 members within the House, this legislation would provide state wildlife agencies a vital source of funding to proactively and cost-effectively conserve at-risk wildlife species.

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit professional society dedicated to inspiring, empowering, and enabling wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society represents over 500 wildlife managers, biologists, ecologists, botanists, hydrologists, geologists, and students in Alaska – all devoted to the sustainable conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat in Alaska.

Alaska has 326 vertebrate species of greatest conservation need as identified by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in their congressionally-mandated conservation action blueprint, known as the State Wildlife Action Plan. Conservation efforts for these species are critically underfunded with Alaska receiving only \$2.5 million of the \$60 million allocated nationwide annually through the existing [State Wildlife Grants](#) program.

H.R. 4647 would make great strides in providing states with the necessary funds needed to ensure common species remain common and at-risk species receive necessary intervention measures. **By dedicating \$1.3 billion for the conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need at the state level, H.R. 4647 will enable wildlife professionals to keep these populations stable before costly federal intervention, such as Endangered Species Act listing, is needed.** This includes sentinel species, i.e. indicators of environmental change, like the arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*), which depends on both coastal tundra and diminishing sea ice habitats, and the western screech-owl (*Megascops kennicottii*), which relies on healthy southcentral and southeastern forests. These dedicated funds would come from existing onshore and offshore energy and mineral extraction royalties already collected by the federal government in sums reaching \$5 billion to \$12 billion annually.

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society supports this legislation so wildlife professionals in our region can hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come. It is our hope your office

will also put your faith in the professionals working tirelessly on the front lines of conservation by co-sponsoring this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan Svoboda
President, Alaska Chapter of TWS

