



SPORTSMEN BLITZ CONGRESS IN CALL TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

WASHINGTON (April 22, 2009) – A large and diverse array of sportsmen and sportswomen is blitzing Capitol Hill this week to advocate for fish and wildlife as the House of Representatives initiates historic hearings on comprehensive climate change legislation. A far cry from stereotypical Earth Day activists, hunters and anglers nevertheless are unified in their belief that America must undertake prompt and decisive action to address global climate change. The dozens of citizen-lobbyists are backed by about 800 organizations from all 50 states who have signed a letter pressing for climate change legislation that prioritizes natural resource conservation.

“Global warming legislation is a front burner issue with hunters and anglers and in record numbers we have come to Congress this year to urge them to pass a strong bill fast,” said Thomas G. Gonzalez, National Wildlife Federation’s board chair. “This is the year and these are the people who will get it done. We are united in calling for climate action now.”

“The wildlife we grew up with is being threatened and we are witnessing the negative impacts first hand. We made a long trek out of the woods and off of our streams to get a strong bill passed,” said Paul Dreman, a citizen activist with Trout Unlimited. “If we can move to a clean energy economy, then we’ll solve global warming and successfully pass on our natural resources to the next generation.”

Leaders in Congress and the president have called for passage of comprehensive climate and energy legislation that would reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 80 percent. A draft bill in the House also provides strong funding for natural resource conservation that the sportsmen emphasize is critical.

“Hunters and anglers made clear in our lobby meetings that we must ensure that natural resources funding must be part of a final bill,” said David Hoskins, executive director, Izaak Walton League of America.

“Sportsmen and sportswomen want natural resources and ecosystems protected from the worst impacts of global warming,” said Dave Nomsen, vice president of Pheasants Forever. “That means two things must happen in Congress: we need a limit on greenhouse gas emissions and we need funding to protect the places where we hunt and fish. Sportsmen can be part of the solution through fish and wildlife habitat conservation projects that sequester carbon.”

Conservationists say the centerpiece of any comprehensive plan must be a cap on carbon pollution. The plan must also invest in natural resource conservation.

"The sportsmen's community recognizes that climate change already is affecting fish, wildlife and their habitat," said George Cooper, president and CEO of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. "Any climate-change legislation passed by Congress must include funding provisions that will make wide scale adaptive fish and wildlife management possible following specific, adaptation-driven plans. Our willingness to dedicate adequate funding for landscape-scale approaches in the comprehensive management of our fish and wildlife populations will be a critical factor in our ability to address the growing impacts of climate change."

Don Young, executive vice president of Ducks Unlimited noted, "Prairie grasslands are the American equivalent of South American rainforests and the most endangered ecosystems in North America. These grasslands are critical to waterfowl and a vital tool to combating climate change. Conserving an acre of native prairie is equal to saving the annual emissions of up to ten automobiles."

Trout populations are declining from increased water temperatures, wetlands critical to waterfowl populations are threatened due to increasing temperatures and sea level rise, and in some areas moose populations have plummeted due to warmer weather. These are only a few examples of the impacts of climate change on wildlife.

Hunting and fishing have traditionally been pillars of American economic prosperity: 34 million people who hunt or fish in the United States spend \$75 billion annually, supporting 1.6 million jobs.

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Immediate Release: April 22, 2009

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