



The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

NOV 20 2012

Dear Secretary Salazar,

I am writing as Chairman of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council) to call your attention to the threat that sequestration of disbursements from both the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, and Wildlife Restoration Account (Trust Funds) poses to the wise management of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources, and the provision of fishing, boating, hunting and recreational shooting programs throughout the States and Territories. The Council requests that you urge the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to provide an exemption from sequestration for these funds, in the short term. We also ask that the Administration work with Congress to amend the "Exemption" provision found in Section 255 of the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, to include both payments into and disbursements from the Trust Funds, in order to provide a more permanent resolution to the problem.

At the November 7, 2012, Council meeting, members discussed issues related to the passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011, including the possible impacts of efforts to control the Federal deficit through the establishment of automatic spending caps on Federal nondefense, mandatory and discretionary spending programs. As you are aware, the spending caps have the potential to result in program cuts of up to \$1.2 trillion over the next 10 years. Among the items to be sequestered are funds provided through the Trust Funds. Monies annually apportioned to the States through these Trust Funds are essential for State fish and wildlife agencies' and State boating administrators' day-to-day operating budgets and are used exclusively to: restore and manage fisheries, wildlife and their habitats; conduct applied fish and wildlife research; operate fish hatcheries and fish stocking programs; open and maintain recreational access to lands and waters; deliver boating and hunter safety education; boating safety law enforcement; and to provide public shooting ranges. Each State fish and wildlife agency and boating administrator will have to determine where to make cuts to balance their reduced budgets if sequestration affects disbursements from the Trust Funds. There is the potential that some State fish and wildlife agencies will lose more than \$1 million from their operating budgets in 2013.

It is our understanding that OMB has determined that funds flowing into the Trust Funds are exempt from sequestration, but that the disbursement of funds out of

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the Trust Funds is not exempt. Because the Trust Funds are not derived through Federal income taxes, but through excise taxes, the Council believes that disbursements from these funds should be exempt from sequestration now and in the future. Members of the fish and wildlife conservation, recreational fishing, hunting, boating communities, and industry agree that sequestering the spending authority of these Trust Funds violates the spirit and intent of the "user-pays, public-benefits" system of fish and wildlife conservation and access creation in the United States. Indeed, sequestration of Trust Fund monies will not accomplish what Congress intends, that is, to reduce spending and cut the Federal deficit. These excise tax dollars will stay in the Trust Fund accounts and will not address the budget deficit. The sequestration of the monies in the Trust Funds does nothing more than accumulate funds in an account and is an unintended consequence of the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Because of the aforementioned negative impact on State fish and wildlife agencies and boating administrators, the Council strongly urges you to request OMB revisit its decision and provide an exemption for the disbursement of funds from these Trust Funds. In addition, we request that the Administration work with Congress to craft a long-term solution for this problem by amending the "Exemption" provision found in Section 255 of the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act so as to exempt both the payments into and disbursements from the Trust Funds. This Congressional action would be the most long-lasting solution, and the Council urges you to work with the leadership in the House and the Senate to protect funding for our State managed fish and wildlife resources, public access programs, and boating safety programs. Members of the fish and wildlife conservation community, and the boating and outdoor recreation communities, are prepared to assist in the effort.

Thank you for your continued efforts to conserve our Nation's aquatic resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Dammrich', written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Dammrich
Chairman

Cc: SFBPC members
Dan Ashe, FWS Director
Hannibal Bolton, AD-WSFR
Elizabeth Stevens, AD-AEA
Bruce Decker, Chief-DPPS