

# Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council

May 30, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council, I want to thank you for the conservation actions that the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture are undertaking on behalf of all Americans, Tribes, sportsmen and women, wildlife and their habitat, and other conservationists around the United States.

At the April 17, 2023, Council meeting, members discussed the ongoing implementation of forest health projects by the Federal government. As a result of that discussion, the Council recommends that you utilize funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and other applicable funding sources to prioritize forest health projects that deliver tangible benefits for wildlife and habitat conservation, while also addressing the catastrophic wildfire crisis that has increased in recent years. Under the President's America the Beautiful initiative, the Administration has pledged to substantially accelerate the pace of conservation across the country and to support the stewardship efforts of landowners, hunters, anglers, and others. The implementation of IRA and IIJA legislation provides a clear opportunity to make good on this commitment and secure historic gains for communities and wildlife management.

The Council encourages you to consider prioritizing early funding towards forest health projects, such as those on the attached list. The list was compiled by a number of sportsmen and women conservation organizations and NGOs, including organizations represented on this Council, who prioritize forest health as a significant component of achieving our shared conservation missions.

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Designated Federal Officer

**Douglas Hobbs**  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:OC  
Falls Church, Virginia 22041  
P 703-358-2336

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your tireless efforts on behalf of hunters, anglers, and wildlife. We look forward to working with you to assist in any way possible. Should you have questions or need more information regarding this matter, please contact Doug Hobbs, the Council's Designated Federal Officer, at [doug\\_hobbs@fws.gov](mailto:doug_hobbs@fws.gov) or (703) 358-2336.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Devney", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Devney  
Vice Chair

Cc: HWCC members  
Matt Strickler, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Bidisha Bhattacharyya, Senior Advisor – USDA  
Robert Harper, Director, Biological & Physical Resources - USDA  
Martha Williams, Director  
Cynthia Martinez, Chief – NWRS  
Barbara Wainman, AD – Office of Communications