



April 25, 2013

The Honorable John Fleming & Gregorio Sablan  
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs  
House Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) – a diverse coalition of 22 conservation, scientific, and sporting organizations representing over 15 million Americans – strongly supports the Wildlife Refuge System Conservation Semipostal Stamp Act of 2013 (H.R. 1384). H.R. 1384 offers a simple, voluntary way for the public to support America’s national wildlife refuges at a time when funding is in decline.

Modeled after the Save Vanishing Species semi-postal stamp, the semi-postal stamp proposed by H.R. 1384 could generate as much as \$10 million toward reversing the National Wildlife Refuge System’s operations and maintenance backlog. Due to a long history of inadequate funding, the System faces a backlog of \$3.1 billion. Annual appropriations provide only about half of the \$900 million that CARE estimates is needed to properly carry out its mission, and \$439 million in damages due to natural disasters were added to the backlog between FY 2005 and FY 2011. With an annual funding decline of nearly \$50 million over the past three years and further cuts expected due to Sequestration, the Refuge System is unlikely to be able to make progress toward reversing the backlog unless alternative solutions such as the semi-postal stamp are authorized.

The funds generated by the proposed semi-postal stamp would enable the Refuge System to move forward with deferred projects that improve wildlife habitat and provide higher quality facilities and programs for the 47 million people who visit refuges annually for hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, photography, education, and more. These benefits extend beyond refuge boundaries by drawing in visitors whose spending in nearby communities has been estimated to generate between \$2.1 and \$4.2 billion annually to local and regional economies. H.R. 1384 offers a straightforward way to supplement the Refuge System’s strained budget for the benefit of wildlife and the American public alike, and we respectfully urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

David Houghton  
Chair, Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement

American Birding Association  
American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Marine Conservation Institute  
National Audubon Society  
National Rifle Association

National Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Safari Club International  
The Corps Network  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wilderness Society  
The Wildlife Society  
Trout Unlimited  
U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance  
Wildlife Forever  
Wildlife Management Institute