Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 28, 2012

The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

As Members of Congress who value the sustainable use of our natural resources, we are writing to urge the U.S. Postal Service to issue a semipostal stamp to support the operations and maintenance of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Semipostal Authorization Act (39 USCS § 416) gives the Postmaster General authority to issue semipostal stamps, which are then sold at a premium to help fund a specific cause of national interest.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's premier network of protected areas devoted to fish and wildlife conservation. Wildlife Refuges are located in every state and U.S. territory, and each year over 44 million people visit the Refuge System. These visits generate over $1.7 billion in sales for businesses in local communities, support nearly 27,000 jobs, and contribute over $185 million in tax revenues.

Yet years of chronic underfunding threaten the viability of the Refuge System and the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fully protect the natural resources within. Today the System faces an operations and maintenance backlog of over $3 billion, resulting in severe shortages of law enforcement and visitor service staff, inadequate monitoring of resources, and a deterioration of Refuge facilities.

A Wildlife Refuge System Conservation Semipostal Stamp would provide an additional revenue stream for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address this funding backlog. The semipostal stamp could be expected to have broad consumer appeal, as it would support local tourism and outdoor recreation economies, as well as preserve the health of the environment.

Now, in times of budget constraint, Americans are looking for ways to revitalize the wildlife refuges in their backyards without increasing taxes or taking funds from other important government services. Consistent with this public interest, we request that the U.S. Postal Service quickly act to issue a semipostal stamp to support the National Wildlife Refuge System.

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Sincerely,

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Oceans, Wildlife and Insular Affairs

Edward J. Markey
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Dan Boren
Member of Congress

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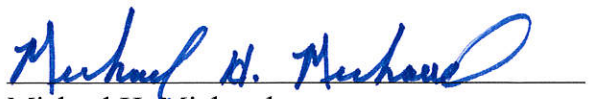

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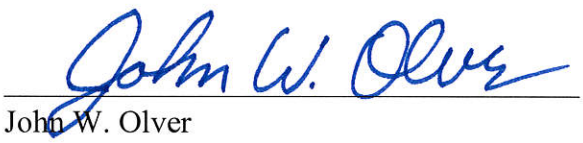

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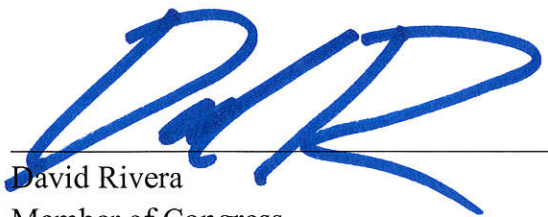

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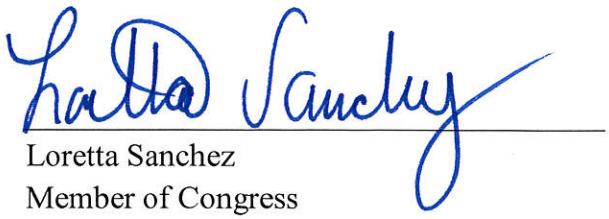

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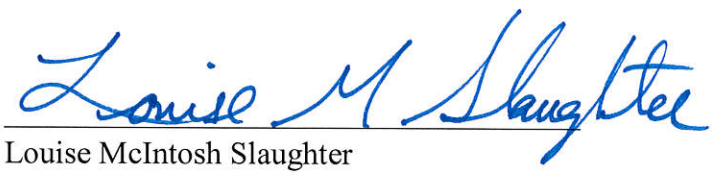

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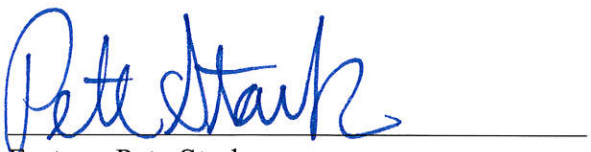
Member of Congress



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