

November 4, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Klobuchar
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Stabenow, Baucus, Klobuchar, Brown and Begich:

The organizations listed below represent hunters, anglers, natural resource professionals and others that share a strong interest in traditional conservation values and America's fish and wildlife resources. We are writing to thank you for your hard work and leadership in developing your recently released offsets and carbon conservation legislation. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a principal and early part of a long-term strategy to ameliorate the effects of climate change should complement national and state efforts to safeguard natural resources, including fish and wildlife, through adaptive management.

We believe your bill will create the framework for an effective and environmentally rigorous program, ensure that a sufficient supply of high quality offset credits exist at a reasonable cost as we transition to a low carbon economy, provide incentives for voluntary emission reductions as early as possible, and provide important ancillary benefits by restoring functioning ecosystems.

Restoring ecosystems (i.e., native forests, native prairies, grasslands and wetlands) to sequester carbon is not only cost-effective, but is a superb tool to maintain biodiversity and achieve resource goals, such as improved water quality, reduced soil erosion, fish and wildlife habitat, including restoring habitat for declining, threatened and endangered species, and outdoor recreation. By doing so, the United States is achieving benefits in other national and international commitments.

We feel your legislation is particularly important in that it achieves the following objectives:

*Provides strong leadership from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide their expertise in land management and working with private landowners, while creating a partnership between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and

USDA that takes advantage of each agency's areas of expertise while providing functional and efficient oversight;

- *Creates projects that recognize forestry and agriculture's ability to manage, enhance, restore and protect lands to improve and maintain carbon stocks;
- *Recognizes the importance of preventing conversion of key habitat such as forests, native prairie and grasslands, and coastal and freshwater wetlands;
- *Sets strong standards for environmental integrity while maintaining cost-effectiveness;
- *Provides a workable framework for forestry offset projects, which are likely to be the major source of domestic offsets in the long-term, and avoids superfluous penalties for natural sequestration reversals when the cap is already protected;
- *Creates a strong, supplement Carbon Conservation Program that will fill the gaps that offsets will not in order to reduce emissions and improve land management of important habitat on federal and private land by encouraging agricultural and silvicultural producers to be more engaged in solving emission problems.

We greatly appreciate your efforts to craft an environmentally rigorous and practical offsets and carbon conservation program that will enable all sectors of our nation's economy to participate in greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts, and that will rely on markets to drive emission reductions where they can be achieved at the greatest efficiency and at the least cost.

Furthermore, we commend you for crafting a science-based offset program with rules and methodologies which will ensure that offsets are measurable, additional, verifiable, and enforceable, while minimizing the transaction costs involved in developing projects. We applaud you and your staff for working with both sides of the aisle and for your willingness to engage with interested parties to enable this important legislation to be the best it can be.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this very crucial and complex issue and it moves through the Congress.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Pheasants Forever
Quail Forever
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wildlife Society

Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi