

July 25th 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations represent millions of hunters and anglers, fish and wildlife professionals and businesses, and others who recreate on and enjoy our public lands. For many years, Congress has considered reform of the General Mining Law of 1872. We urge you to take action on modernizing the 135 year old mining law this Congress, and we offer our assistance and support.

Public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service harbor some of the most important fish and wildlife habitat and provide some of the finest hunting and angling opportunities in the country. For example, public lands contain well more than 50 percent of the nation's blue-ribbon trout streams and are strongholds for imperiled trout and salmon in the western United States. More than 80 percent of the most critical habitat for elk is found on lands managed by the Forest Service and the BLM, alone. Pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, mule deer, salmon and steelhead, and countless other fish and wildlife species are similarly dependent on public lands.

Historically, mining played an important role in the social and economic well-being of many communities, and it was vital in the development and settlement of the western United States.

Hunting and fishing, on the other hand, generated more than \$63 billion in revenues to local economies in 2006, which is roughly equal to Americans' total spending at all spectator sports, casinos, movies, golf courses and country clubs, amusement parks and arcades combined, according to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As you consider legislative reform of the 1872 Mining Law, America's sportsmen urge you to consider the following recommendations:

- Allocate funds generated from royalties and fees assessed on mined materials toward state fish and wildlife departments, conservation organizations, and others for fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects associated with past mining.
- Provide "Good Samaritans," that have no connection to the abandoned mine waste or interest in re-mining it for minerals, reclamation incentives and common-sense liability relief.
- Ensure that resource professionals have full discretion in the planning and permitting processes to protect public lands where high fish, water, and wildlife values exist.
- Prohibit the patenting or sale of public lands under this law.

- Provide for harmonious integration of state and federal wildlife habitat and population objectives in permit operating plans.

Thank you for considering our recommendations, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that mining on public lands is modernized to the benefit of fish, wildlife, and water resources.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bear Trust
Boone and Crockett Club
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Dallas Safari Club
Federation of Fly Fishers
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep
National Wildlife Federation
North American Bear Foundation
Orion The Hunters Institute
Pope and Young Club
Quail Unlimited
Quality Deer Management
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wildlife Society
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute