

Archery Trade Association \* Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies \* Boone and Crockett Club \* Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation \* Conservation Force \* Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports \* Dallas Safari Club\* Delta Waterfowl Foundation \* Ducks Unlimited \* Houston Safari Club \* Masters of Foxhounds Foundation \* Mule Deer Foundation \* National Rifle Association \* National Shooting Sports Foundation \* National Trappers Association \* National wild Turkey Federation \* Orion the Hunter's Institute \* Pheasants Forever \* Professional Outfitters and Guides Association of America \* Quail Forever \* Quality Deer Management Association \* Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation \* Ruffed Grouse Society \* Safari Club International \* Sportsmen's Alliance \* Whitetails Unlimited \* Wild Sheep Foundation \* Wildlife Forever \* Wildlife Management Institute

February 27, 2017

Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
US Senate  
S-230 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Cornyn, Majority Whip  
US Senate  
S-208 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairwoman  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Senator Cornyn, and Chairwoman Murkowski:

The House sent you on February 16, 2017, with a strong bipartisan vote of 225-193, HJ Res.69 which if enacted would nullify the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) final rule "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska" (81 Fed. Reg. 52248 (August 5, 2016)). Both Chairwoman Murkowski and Senator Sullivan diligently sought to legislatively stop the promulgation of the final rule, but the bills were not enacted.

We write representing organizations that collectively include millions of wildlife conservationists, hunter conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts, and wildlife scientists, in strong support of HJ Res. 69. We respectfully urge expedited Senate consideration and passage. Our community exhausted all Executive Branch appeals and remedies urging the FWS to slow down the Proposed Rule, and revise it to reflect a proposal mutually agreed to by the State of Alaska and the FWS; all to no end. It is time for Congress to nullify this final rule.

This final rule boldly preempts the authority of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage wildlife for both recreational and subsistence hunting on NWRs, which authority of the state is affirmed by Congress in the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (NWRISA). Congress promised that the citizens of Alaska, working through their Department of Fish and Game, would be able to manage their own fish and wildlife, as do the other 49 states.

The FWS final rule was premised on meeting as a priority the FWS policy on Biological Integrity, Diversity and Environmental Health; which would inadvisably set a precedent nationally. This policy compels hands-off management, including no hunting, in spite of the fact that the NWRISA identifies hunting as one of six priority general public uses and directs the Secretary to facilitate those six uses when compatible. Loss of hunting on all NWRs would mean loss of millions of dollars by our rural communities.

Many members of our organizations enjoy Alaska's bounty of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for unrivaled hunting, fishing and outdoor experiences. The sustainable management of these natural resources needs to be led by the State working in cooperation with the FWS. We urge that you expeditiously pass HJ Res. 49 which will restore the jurisdictional state-federal relationship as Congress has previously directed.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our grave concerns about this harmful and illegal rule which if left un-remedied, significantly affects the use and appreciation of the magnificent natural resources that are found in Alaska.

Sincerely,

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Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
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cc: Honorable Dan Sullivan