



CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE COALITION

March 4, 2009

Letters Individually Addressed

RE: Please Cosponsor the Conservation Easement Incentive Act

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned conservation, agriculture, and sporting organizations, we urge you to become an original cosponsor of the Conservation Easement Incentive Act to be introduced by Congressmen Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Eric Cantor (R-VA). First passed in 2006, the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations helped America's land trusts conserve 535,000 more acres in 2006-2007 than in the two years prior to its enactment. This bill will keep this critical conservation tool from expiring at the end of 2009.

Landowners can retire the development rights on their land by donating a conservation easement—keeping farm, ranch and forest lands in productive use, protecting important fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving our scenic and historic heritage across America. Under previous law, landowners with modest incomes received little or no tax benefit from the donation of development rights—often their family's most valuable asset. By allowing easement donors to deduct a larger portion of their income over a longer period of time, this incentive has helped thousands of landowners afford to choose conservation over development.

Identical legislation in the 110th Congress (H.R. 1576/S. 469) had 183 House and 28 Senate cosponsors. Both the outgoing Administration's FY 2009 budget and the incoming Administration's campaign website endorsed extending this important conservation tool. The 2008 Farm Bill renewed the incentive through December 2009, but landowners considering a perpetual commitment for their land should not be pressured by an artificial deadline, and many will never begin the process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive.

We encourage you to become an original cosponsor of the Conservation Easement Incentive Act by contacting Travis Robey in Congressman Mike Thompson's Office (5-3311) or Wyatt Stewart in Congressman Eric Cantor's Office (5-2815). For more detailed information, please contact Russell Shay of the Land Trust Alliance at 202-638-4725 x305 or rshay@lta.org.

Sincerely,

Darin Schroeder, VP of Conservation Advocacy
American Bird Conservancy

Rita Nezek, Vice President, Public Affairs
American Forest Foundation

Jon Scholl, President
American Farmland Trust

Barbara Linke, Director of Public Policy
American Quarter Horse Association

Dr. Gus Rassam, Executive Director
American Fisheries Society

Gordon C. Robertson, Vice President
American Sportfishing Association

Jay McAninch, President/CEO
Archery Trade Association

Gary J. Taylor, Legislative Director
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Jim Martin, Conservation Director
Berkley Conservation Institute

Steve Mealey
Conservation Policy Committee Co-Chairman
Boone & Crockett Club

Jay McAninch, President/CEO
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance

Gregory Avioli, President and CEO
Breeders' Cup Limited

Fowler West
California Association of Winegrape Growers

Emily Egel, Policy Associate
Civil War Preservation Trust

Gary Kania, Vice President of Policy
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

John J. Jackson, III, President
Conservation Force

Noah Matson, VP for Land Conservation
Defenders of Wildlife

Joel Brice, Director of Conservation Programs
Delta Waterfowl Foundation

Barton C. James, Director of Public Policy
Ducks Unlimited

Michael J. Bean
Senior Director of the Wildlife Program
Environmental Defense Fund

Deb Balliet, Chief Executive Officer
Equestrian Land Conservation Resource

Nancy Perry, VP of Government Affairs
The Humane Society of the United States

David Hoskins, Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

David Switzer, Executive Director
Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders

Rand Wentworth, President
Land Trust Alliance

Dennis Foster, Executive Director
Masters of Foxhounds Association

Rock Ringling, Managing Director
Montana Land Reliance

Miles Moretti, President/CEO
Mule Deer Foundation

Mike Dalton, Legislative Director
National Audubon Society

Elizabeth Belleville
Government Relations Director
National Conference of State Historic
Preservation Officers

Emily Wadhams
Vice President of Public Policy
National Trust for Historic Preservation

James Earl Kennamer, Ph.D.
Chief Conservation Officer
National Wild Turkey Federation

Jim Lyon
Senior Vice President for Conservation Policy
National Wildlife Federation

Mary Klein, President and CEO
NatureServe

Ralph Rogers, Executive Director
North American Grouse Partnership

Keith Trego, Executive Director
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Mike Beam, President
Partnership of Rangeland Trusts

Dave Nomsen
Vice-president of Governmental Affairs
Pheasants Forever

Chris Miller, President
Piedmont Environmental Council

Mike Schlegel
Conservation Committee Chairman
Pope & Young Club

David Howell, Director, Ag/Wildlife Services
Quail Unlimited

Kip Adams, Director of Education & Outreach
Quality Deer Management Association

Jack Blackwell
Vice-President of Lands and Conservation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Dr. William Moritz
Acting-Director of Governmental Affairs
Safari Club International

Kevin Fry, President
Scenic America

Kirby Brown, Vice President Public Policy
Texas Wildlife Association

Dan Sakura, VP for Government Relations
The Conservation Fund

Philip Tabas, Vice President/General Counsel
The Nature Conservancy

Alan Front, Sr. Vice President
The Trust for Public Land

Gary J. Wolfe, Executive Director
The Vital Ground Foundation

Laura M. Bies, Director of Government Affairs
The Wildlife Society

George Cooper, President
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Steve Moyer, Director of Government Affairs
Trout Unlimited

John Long, Chief Executive Officer
United States Equestrian Federation

E. Thomas Tuchmann, President
U.S. Forest Capital

Doug Grann, President and CEO
Wildlife Forever

Steven A. Williams, President
Wildlife Management Institute