



His Vision
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Our Mission

May 3, 2011

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and our partners in the hunting and fishing community, I encourage you to co-sponsor the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act (S. 339), introduced by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Charles Grassley (R-IA), and Jon Tester (D-MT), or the Conservation Easement Incentive Act, which will soon be introduced by Congressmen Jim Gerlach (R-PA) and Mike Thompson (D-CA).

Conservation easements have for years served as an important tool for the voluntary protection of important fish and wildlife habitat on private lands and for the enhancement of hunting and fishing opportunities. Thanks to Congressional action in 2006, landowners are able to realize significant tax benefits for the tremendous public benefit their conservation efforts provide, which extend far beyond their property lines. However, without passage of this strongly bipartisan legislation, these important tax incentives will no longer be available to landowners interested in conservation once they expire on December 31, 2011.

Identical legislation in the 111th Congress (S. 812/H.R. 1831) had 41 Senate and 274 House co-sponsors from all 50 states. Extending the legislation has the support of more than 50 leading hunting, fishing, conservation, environmental, farming and ranching organizations and land trusts.

The lapse of this incentive for most of 2010 led to the loss of hundreds of potential donations of development rights on lands with important natural, agricultural and historic values. An on-again, off-again incentive makes it very difficult to educate potential donors, and donating a conservation easement is a lengthy and expensive process that many landowners will not begin without knowing this incentive will be in place.

I encourage you to become a co-sponsor of the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act by contacting Tiffany Smith at the Senate Finance Committee (4-4515) or the Conservation Easement Incentive Act by contacting Lori Prater in Congressman Jim Gerlach's office (5-3415) or Carla McNeill in Congressman Mike Thompson's office (5-3311).

Sincerely,

Whit Fosburgh
President and CEO

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