

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2009

Dear Colleague:

As fellow conservationists and co-Chairmen of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, we invite you to cosponsor the Conservation Easement Incentive Act, H.R. 1831. As a member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, you are well aware of the importance of having places to hunt and fish in your community. You also know our outdoor pursuits depend on maintaining viable fish and wildlife habitat. Unless Congress acts, a 2006 tax incentive for conservation easements that helps us achieve both goals will expire at the end of 2009!

More than 70 percent of wildlife gets food and shelter from our working farm, ranch and forest lands, but we're losing these habitats to development at the alarming rate of 5,000 acres each day. This legislation encourages voluntary, incentive-based donations of future development rights to ensure that farm and ranch families can continue to work their land, sell hunting leases and provide wildlife habitat for future generations.

Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, among others, have had great success using this incentive to accelerate the pace of wildlife habitat conservation. In addition to encouraging outright donations, this incentive helps them leverage Farm Bill and North American Wetlands Conservation Act funding. In 2006 and 2007, the incentive helped such organizations work with willing landowners to conserve over 2 million acres with conservation easements, a 535,000 acre increase over the two years prior to its enactment.

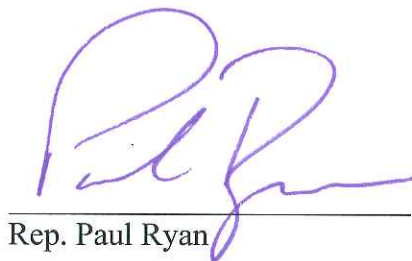
The 2008 Farm Bill renewed the incentive through December 2009, but landowners considering a perpetual commitment to conservation should not be pressured by an artificial deadline, and many will never begin the lengthy process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive.

To co-sponsor H.R. 1831, please contact Jonathon Birdsong (5-3311) in the office of Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA) or Wyatt Stewart (5-2815) in the office of Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA). Thank you for your continued commitment to wildlife habitat conservation and the future of hunting and fishing in America.

Sincerely,



Rep. Dan Boren



Rep. Paul Ryan