

**California-Nevada Chapter
American Fisheries Society**
P.O. Box 7265, Davis, CA, 95617-2653
<https://afs-calneva.org> afs.calneva@gmail.com



May 3, 2018

The Honorable Norma Judith Torres
U.S. House of Representatives
1713 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Torres:

I am writing to express the California-Nevada Chapter of the American Fisheries Society's support for H.R. 4647, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. This bipartisan bill, introduced in Congress in December by Representatives Jeff Fortenberry (R.-Neb.) and Debbie Dingell (D.-Mich.), would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually for state fish and wildlife agencies to implement proactive, voluntary, and incentive-based conservation of imperiled species.

Despite the remarkable diversity of fish and wildlife in the U.S., populations of many species are in decline. Freshwater animals have been particularly hard hit and approximately 40 percent of the nation's freshwater fish species are now rare or imperiled. Similarly, three-quarters of the nation's freshwater mussel species are imperiled or vulnerable. Emerging diseases, invasive species, habitat loss, and extreme weather threaten many fish and wildlife populations at a scale inconceivable just a few decades ago. Proactive conservation can reverse this trend and keep species from becoming endangered.

At the request of Congress, every state has developed a State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) to assess the health of their state's fish and wildlife and outline conservation actions necessary to sustain them. Collectively, these action plans have identified 12,000 species with the greatest conservation need and formed a nationwide strategy to prevent them from becoming endangered. However, the current federal State Wildlife Grants program only funds a fraction of actions states need to implement to conserve these species. This bill would provide the funding to implement 75 percent of every state's SWAP using existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters. California stands to receive more than \$63 million each year to fund its SWAP.

Conservation targets for fish in the California SWAP are a combination of habitat, species, and ecosystem process measures. This includes anadromous fish which spend part of their life in freshwater and part of their life in the Pacific Ocean. Examples of anadromous fish in California include the Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, Steelhead, Coastal Cutthroat Trout, Green Sturgeon, and White Sturgeon. In some cases, such as with Coastal Cutthroat Trout, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified that the greatest conservation need is for current

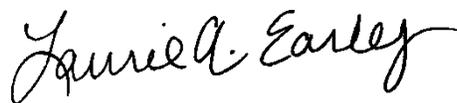
The mission of the American Fisheries Society is to advance sound science, promote professional development, and disseminate science-based fisheries information for the global protection, conservation, and sustainability of fisheries resources and aquatic ecosystems.

information on their numbers and distribution. These demographic data will inform those making management decisions, so that the most appropriate actions for the conservation of the species can be taken. With funding from Recovery America's Wildlife Act, biologists would better be able to identify the most effective conservation measures. Conservation measures may include protection of key habitats, and restoring habitat to be more productive for species such as Coastal Cutthroat Trout.

The California-Nevada Chapter of the American Fisheries Society was founded in 1966 and includes over 500 fisheries and aquatic science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, and diverse private employers. Our Chapter is actively engaged in fisheries and conservation activities throughout California and Nevada to advance our profession and the cause of fisheries conservation and management.

Proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, and good for business. We ask that you please consider co-sponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie A. Earley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Earley, President
California-Nevada Chapter
American Fisheries Society
PO Box 72653
Davis, CA 95617

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