

NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY SYSTEM: STRATEGIC HATCHERY AND WORKFORCE PLANNING REPORT

OVERSIGHT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE,
OCEANS AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**HEARING ON NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY
SYSTEM: STRATEGIC HATCHERY AND
WORKFORCE PLANNING REPORT**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2014
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C.**

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. John Fleming, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Fleming, Sablan and Garcia.

Dr. FLEMING. The Subcommittee will come to order.

The Chairman notes the presence of a quorum.

Good morning. Today the Subcommittee will examine the November 2013 report issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on their vision on how our national fishery hatchery system should operate in the future.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN FLEMING, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF LOUISIANA**

Dr. FLEMING. Before getting into that report, however, it is important to understand that Congress established this network of Federal fish hatcheries 143 years ago to address seriously declining fish populations and to compensate for lost recreational opportunities caused by the construction of Federal water projects.

For over a century, these hatcheries have propagated tens of millions of fish which have been used to stock rivers, lakes and streams throughout America. From its high in 1940 the number of Federal hatcheries has declined from 136 to nearly 70 today. These facilities, which average more than 70 years of age, produce and distribute 140 million fish and 120 million fish eggs with a value of over \$5 billion each year.

In 2011, recreational anglers took 69 million trips. They caught 345 million fish, supported 364,000 jobs, and the recreational fishing industry contributed over \$70 billion to our economy.

Over the years there have been some changes to the hatchery system, including the enactment of the Mitchell Act of 1938, the transfer of a number of Federal fish hatcheries to the States and the passage of the National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act of 2006. During that entire period there has been an unwavering commitment to produce and distribute native and non-native fish for recreational purposes.

During the Obama Administration, there has been new challenges, including consistent budget requests for less money for the hatchery system and now the self-fulfilling report that indicates that even if funding is increased by 5 percent, recreational propa-

gation programs will be terminated and Service employees will be reassigned primarily from Southeast Region 4.

The State of Louisiana has one national fish hatchery, the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery in my district which raises over 1 million recreational fish per year. For the past 83 years this warm water hatchery has, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, provided millions of catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill, and sunfish, which have been used to stock public waters throughout my State.

During the course of this hearing, I intend to try to find out why the Service targeted hatcheries that produce recreational species.

What is the statutory authority for simply deciding after nearly 150 years that the hatchery system will no longer mitigate for Federal water projects?

What is the definition of "fully reimbursed"?

And what input, if any do the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Authority, the Tennessee Valley Authority have in determining their rate of payment?

Are there certain national fish hatcheries or propagation programs that could be conveyed at no cost to various States?

[The prepared statement of Dr. Fleming follows:

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN FLEMING, CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

Good morning, today, the Subcommittee will examine the November 2013 Report issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on their vision on how our National Fish Hatchery System should operate in the future.

Before getting to that report, however, it is important to understand that Congress established this network of Federal fish hatcheries 143 years ago to address seriously declining fish populations and to compensate for lost recreational opportunities caused by the construction of Federal water projects. For over a century, these hatcheries have propagated tens of millions of fish which have been used to stock rivers, lakes and streams throughout America.

From its high in 1940, the number of Federal hatcheries has declined from 136 to nearly 70 today. These facilities, which average more than 70 years of age, produce and distribute 140 million fish and 120 million fish eggs with a value of over \$5 billion each year. In 2011, recreational anglers took 69 million trips, they caught 345 million fish, supported 364,000 jobs and the recreational fishing industry contributed over \$70 billion to our economy.

Over the years, there have been some changes to the hatchery system including the enactment of the Mitchell Act of 1938, the transfer of a number of Federal fish hatcheries to the States and the passage of the National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act of 2006. During that entire period, there has been an unwavering commitment to produce and distribute native and non-native fish for recreational purposes.

During the Obama Administration there have been new challenges including consistent budget requests for less money for the hatchery system and now the self-fulfilling report that indicates that even if funding is increased by 5 percent, recreational propagation programs will be terminated and Service employees will be reassigned primarily from Southeast Region 4.

The State of Louisiana has one national fish hatchery, the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery in my district, which raises over 1 million recreational fish per year. For the past 83 years, this warm water hatchery has in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provided millions of catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill and sun fish which have been used to stock public waters throughout my State.

During the course of this hearing, I intend to try to find out why the Service targeted hatcheries that produce recreational species? What is the statutory authority for simply deciding after nearly 150 years that the hatchery system will no longer mitigate for Federal water projects? What is the definition of "fully reimbursed" and what input, if any, did the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Authority or the Tennessee Valley Authority have in determining their rate of payment?

Are there certain national fish hatcheries or propagation programs that could be conveyed at no cost to various States?

Dr. FLEMING. I am now pleased to recognize the Ranking Member for any statement that he would like to make.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And good morning, everyone. Good morning, Dr. Roe.

Today's hearing focuses on the Fish and Wildlife Service's recent review of the National Fish Hatchery System, and I commend the Service for taking a proactive, transparent and fiscally responsible approach to assessing and prioritizing its fish hatchery operations.

The report lays out a roadmap for ensuring that the fish hatchery system supports the Service's mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Service's responsibility to protect and restore threatened and endangered species figures prominently in its operation of the hatchery system, as well it should. Generations of water quality degradation, habitat destruction and direct exploitation have taken a massive toll on native fish populations and have depleted many to the point that they require the protection of the Endangered Species Act just to survive.

Given the Committee Majority's much expressed concern and continued insistence that the Service should focus more on species recovery and less on species listing under the ESA, I would expect them to show strong support for a hatchery management plan that does just that.

I understand and appreciate the desire of many sportsmen that hatcheries continue to support the production of recreationally important species, like rainbow trout.

Fisheries for the species contribute significantly to local economies. However, as our Majority continues to ask the Fish and Wildlife Service and other Federal agencies to do more with less, it has become clear that really they can only do less with less.

That being the case, they must balance their priorities to meet a wide range of responsibilities, including native species recovery, tribal trust obligations and breeding of sport fish. Fortunately, President Obama's budget proposal includes an additional \$2.1 billion for the hatchery system. This would close the system's current budget gap and allow hatcheries to stay open and programs that underpin recreational fisheries to continue.

I urge anyone who supports these recreational fisheries to also support the President's budget.

I am also interested in learning more today about the role of States and other Federal agencies in supporting the Service's hatchery activities, including those that mitigate environmental damage caused by public works projects. These partners could clearly benefit greatly from their use of adequate resources, and it is important to ensure that they share in the stewardship responsibility.

I also want to thank Chairman Fleming, in particular, for not having another Lacey Act hearing today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sablan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN,
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS AND INSULAR
AFFAIRS

Today's hearing focuses on the Fish and Wildlife Service's recent review of the National Fish Hatchery System. I commend the Service for taking a proactive, transparent, and fiscally responsible approach to assessing and prioritizing its fish hatchery operations. The report lays out a roadmap for ensuring that the Hatchery System supports the Service's mission to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Service's responsibility to protect and restore threatened and endangered species figures prominently in its operation of the Hatchery System, as well it should. Generations of water quality degradation, habitat destruction, and direct exploitation have taken a massive toll on native fish populations, and have depleted many to the point that they require the protection of the Endangered Species Act just to survive.

Given the Committee majority's much expressed concern and continued insistence that the Service should focus more on species recovery and less on species listing under the ESA, I would expect them to show strong support for a hatchery management plan that does just that.

I understand and appreciate the desire of many sportsmen that hatcheries continue to support the production of recreationally important species like rainbow trout. Fisheries for these species contribute significantly to local economies. However, as our Majority continues to ask the Fish and Wildlife Service and other Federal agencies to do more with less, it has become clear that, really, they can only do less with less. That being the case, they must balance their priorities to meet a wide range of responsibilities, including native species recovery, tribal trust obligations, and breeding of sport fish.

Fortunately, President Obama's brand new budget proposal includes an additional \$2.1 billion for the Hatchery System. This would close the System's current budget gap, and allow hatcheries to stay open and programs that underpin recreational fisheries to continue. I urge anyone who supports these recreational fisheries to also support the President's request.

I am also interested in learning more today about the role of States and other Federal agencies in supporting the Service's hatchery activities, including those that mitigate environmental damage caused by public works projects. These partners clearly benefit greatly from their use of aquatic resources, and it is important to ensure that they share in the stewardship responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Dr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman, but we are going to have one tomorrow actually.

Mr. SABLAN. We do?

Dr. FLEMING. No, no. I am just kidding. I am kidding, but I just thought I would throw that in.

Well, thank you. I thank the gentleman.

We will now hear from our first panel of witnesses, which includes Congressman David P. Roe, who represents the First District of the State of Tennessee, and Congressman Doug Collins from the Ninth District of the State of Georgia.

Before doing so, Mr. Crawford from Arkansas was also going to be on our panel. He will not be able to be here. So I would like to submit for the record his written statement, and hearing no objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crawford follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

Chairman Fleming and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today. As you know, my district hosts two of the largest mitigation hatcheries in the United States, the Norfolk and the Greers Ferry National Fish Hatcheries. These hatcheries were built, and have been operated, to mitigate the damage to the sporting fish in Arkansas streams and rivers directly caused by Federal water development projects. And further, to ensure that the towns and communities that depended on these world-class fisheries from well before the construction of the water development projects, can continue to welcome the tens of thousands of visiting anglers every year.

These hatcheries play an important and central role in the lives of many of my constituents, the communities where they live, and the continued success of countless businesses. In 2010 a study was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the economic impact of the Norfolk and Greers Ferry Hatcheries. This study revealed the truly astounding impact that the Norfolk and Greers Ferry hatcheries have on our fisheries, especially the now cold-water ones which have replaced the once rich, warm-water fisheries destroyed by Federal water development projects.

The study took a deep and truly revealing look into the economic impact these hatcheries bring to the State of Arkansas. For instance, the Greers Ferry National Fish Hatchery is responsible for over \$36 Million of retail expenditures, and over 750 good jobs, which themselves generate almost \$20 million. Greers Ferry further generates over \$2 million in State and local tax revenue and over \$2.3 million in Federal income tax. The total economic output is over \$68 million a year. The 2010 budget for Greers Ferry, the year of this study, was \$606,000. That's a return on investment of about \$113 for every dollar spent.

The numbers for the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery are even bigger with \$47 million in retail expenditures, almost 1,000 jobs with over \$25 million in job income, State and local taxes of over \$2.8 million, Federal taxes of over \$3 million, for a total annual economic output of over \$90 million. Norfolk's 2010 budget was \$950,000. That is a return on investment of close to \$95 for every dollar spent.

Altogether, there is over \$150 million in annual economic output, and over 1,700 jobs directly at stake. And that's just my district.

Five years ago the Fish and Wildlife Service bore the entire cost of running these hatcheries. With some gumption and the example of western hatcheries which operate on a reimbursement arrangement, the Service began negotiating in earnest with Water Development Agencies to recapture part of the cost of running the mitigation hatcheries. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began to contribute, and this day contributes almost two-thirds the cost of running the mitigation hatchery program. Not long after, the Bureau of Reclamation followed the Corps of Engineers and began to contribute. This last year the Tennessee Valley Authority has begun to contribute as well, to the tune of \$900,000 per year. Five years ago there was no reimbursement and Fish and Wildlife paid the cost, today the mitigation hatcheries are operating at close to full reimbursement.

Unbelievably, just as this hard work has begun to really pay off, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun to look at making significant cuts in the mitigation hatchery program. Pulling resources from the mitigation program now, at a time when we are so close to fully reimbursed, is short-sighted and foolhardy. A hatchery manager once told me that running a hatchery is like running a battleship—it can take years to shut down and years to bring it back online. Once a hatchery begins the shutdown process, it can take a year or more to complete, and even more years to bring back to full operational status. To even entertain shutting down any of the mitigation hatcheries when we are so close to fully, 100 percent reimbursed is to me the kind of short-sighted thinking that makes people back home shake their heads and wonder just what we are doing here in Washington.

These hatcheries play a significant role in the lives of business owners who serve the tens of thousands of anglers who continue to come to Arkansas from all over the Country, in the lives of my constituents who have learned from a young age about responsible fishing and being careful stewards of our natural resources, in the lives of the thousands who have jobs either directly or indirectly because of these two hatcheries. People like Leon Alexander, who leads the Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery, and many others have tirelessly volunteered and given generously to help make these hatcheries more than just a place where fish are grown before being released. They have become places to visit and learn how fish grow from egg to fry, to fingerling to mature adult, to see and experience firsthand the lifecycle of fish. Places where young men and women learn the value of conservation

and respect for hunting and fishing laws. These hatcheries play host to festivals and events that draw our communities closer together, programs to bring fishing to handicapped and disabled children, and are staffed by some of the most dedicated and hard-working people I have had the pleasure to meet.

I am truly astonished that the Service is even considering taking resources away from the mitigation hatchery program. A program that delivers so much, from thousands of jobs and millions in local, State and Federal tax revenue, to the very things that throughout our Nation's history have brought families and communities together. This at the very time when the net cost to the Service is approaching . . . nothing. I strongly urge the Service to carefully consider these things before any actions are taken to cut this program, and further to give thought to the language in our appropriations which has specifically stated that it is the intent that this program be funded until full reimbursement can be reached. Fortunately, it looks like we are very, very close to that.

Dr. FLEMING. Your written testimony, of course, will appear in the full hearing record, and each of my distinguished colleagues will be recognized for 5 minutes.

Our microphones are not automatic. So please press the button when you are ready to begin.

Dr. Roe, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID P. ROE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**

Dr. ROE. Thank you, Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs Subcommittee this morning on the national fish hatchery system.

This topic is very important to my district as we are the proud host of the Erwin National Fish Hatchery in Unicoi County, Tennessee. The Erwin Hatchery was established in 1894 and is an important part of the brood stock program, National Brood Stock Program.

Erwin serves as a primary brood stock facility for three strains of rainbow trout and produces between 13 and 17 million disease-free eggs annually. These eggs are then shipped to Federal, State and tribal hatcheries to support their fishery management efforts.

Additionally, the Erwin Hatchery provides eggs to research centers, classrooms, and universities around the Nation. The Erwin Fish Hatchery and resulting trout stocking account for nearly 3,500 jobs and \$89.6 million in wages and salary income across the United States. Each taxpayer dollar spent for trout production at hatcheries in the region leads to nearly \$73 in economic output.

Last November, I was pleased to see that the Fish and Wildlife Service announced that there would be no hatchery closures this year, but I was also troubled by its warning that closures might be necessary in fiscal year 2015. During these tough economic times, I understand and believe wholeheartedly that we must all do more with less, but it seems to me that a program that sees \$73 return on every dollar spent should be protected and prioritized.

The omnibus funding bill included important funding for these programs, and thanks to the leadership of Senator Lamar Alexander includes a stipulation that none of the funding included in the Department of the Interior's budget can be used to close fish hatcheries.

There is also a provision in the Army Corps of Engineers' budget that includes \$4.7 million to reimburse the Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to operate Erwin and Dale Hollow facilities in Tennessee, as well as more than \$46 million to continue operations at every fish hatchery system as requested.

The Tennessee Valley Authority has also worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service to assist in providing the funds needed to continue hatchery operations, and I commend them for this.

While I am hopeful that the Fish and Wildlife Service can obtain reimbursable agreements with various agencies that benefit downstream from the Erwin Fish Hatcheries, I do not believe it would be prudent to eliminate funding for this program within the Fish and Wildlife Service until these agreements have been signed.

Fishing benefits a whole host of businesses and provides tourism dollars to many regions. So closure of fish hatcheries would be devastating to the economy in Tennessee and throughout the Southeast region, as the Chairman just spoke.

I hope the Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to pursue partnerships with stakeholders and focus on creative ways to keep these programs up and running rather than continue the threats of closure each year.

I thank the Subcommittee for holding this hearing on this important issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to preserve these hatcheries for years to come, and just as an aside, Mr. Chairman, I have actually been to the hatchery many times in my district and have stepped out in the water with waders and actually retrieved the eggs. It is really remarkable what is done.

And what is also remarkable is that the vision just 5 years after the cessation of the most violent war that has ever been, the Civil War that occurred on this country that the leaders had the vision to begin to look at our natural resources in this Nation in 1870, and I think it was President Grant that started this Fish Hatchery Program.

So just from a historical perspective, we need to look at that and the economic impact that it has on all of our regions in the country.

So I thank you for the opportunity to be here, both to the Chairman and the Ranking Member.

I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Roe follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAVID P. ROE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan and esteemed members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs Subcommittee this afternoon on the National Fish Hatchery System. This topic is very important to my district, as we are proud to host the Erwin National Fish Hatchery in Unicoi County. The Erwin hatchery was established in 1894 and is an important part of the National Broodstock Program. Erwin serves as the primary broodstock facility for three strains of rainbow trout and produces between 13 and 17 million disease-free eggs annually. These eggs are then shipped to Federal, State and tribal hatcheries to support their fishery management efforts. Additionally, the Erwin hatchery provides eggs to research centers, classrooms and universities around the country.

The Erwin fish hatchery and resulting trout stocking account for nearly 3,500 jobs and \$89.6 million in wage and salary income across the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southeast Region. Each taxpayer dollar spent for trout production at hatcheries

in the region leads to nearly \$73 in economic output. Last November, I was pleased to see that the Fish and Wildlife Service announced there would be no hatchery closures this year, but I was also troubled by its warning that closures might be necessary in fiscal year 2015. During these tough economic times, I understand and believe wholeheartedly that we all must do more with less, but it seems to me a program that sees a \$73 return on every dollar spent should be protected and prioritized.

The omnibus funding bill included important funding for these programs and, thanks to the leadership of Senator Lamar Alexander, includes a stipulation that none of the funding included in the Department of Interior's budget can be used to close fish hatcheries. There is also a provision in the Army Corps of Engineers budget that includes \$4.7 million to reimburse the Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to operate the Erwin and Dale Hollow facilities in Tennessee, as well as more than \$46 million to continue operations at every hatchery in the system as requested. The Tennessee Valley Authority has also worked with Fish and Wildlife to assist in providing the funds needed to continue hatchery operations.

While I am hopeful that FWS can obtain reimbursable agreements with the various agencies that benefit downstream from the Erwin fish hatcheries, I do not believe it would be prudent to eliminate funding for this program within the FWS until these agreements are signed. Fishing benefits a whole host of businesses and provides tourism dollars to many regions, so closure of fish hatcheries would be devastating to the economy in Tennessee and throughout the Southeast Region.

I hope Fish and Wildlife will continue to pursue partnerships with stakeholders and focus on creative ways to keep these programs up and running, rather than continuing with threats of closure each fiscal year.

I thank the subcommittee for holding a hearing on this important issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to preserve these hatcheries for years to come.

Dr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman for his comments and testimony.

The Chair would now like to recognize Congressman Collins, who is fashionably late this morning.

You are now recognize, sir, for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DOUG COLLINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, I do apologize. You know how schedules can get, but I am very appreciative of this hearing and very appreciative of being able to come testify before you this morning.

Again, thank you, Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Sablan, and distinguished members of this Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the recent National Fish Hatchery System Planning Report and the Chattahoochee National Forestry Fish Hatchery that is located in Georgia's Ninth Congressional District.

Suches, which in Georgia is a sleepy community in Union County located high up in the Appalachian Mountains, it is rural area without any major stores or banks. One thing it does have, however, is the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery.

Chattahoochee is a mitigation hatchery established in 1937 after the numerous dams and reservoirs disrupted the natural flow of the fish to the area. It starts at the tail waters of the multiple projects of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority, with rainbow trout for the enjoyment of over 160,000 anglers per year.

The tail waters would be barren without this facility and the services that they provide. In fact, to be honest, I was more than

surprised when I heard that the Fish and Wildlife Service was thinking of closing this hatchery. It is beloved by the community. It shows a great return on investment, and it is an economic engine of this rural part of Georgia. This hatchery is a major source of revenue for Suches and northeast Georgia in general, having generated just over \$30 million of total economic output on just an investment of \$740,000.

Talk about being a bang for your buck, this hatchery delivers that in a big way. According to the planning report itself, since its establishment in 1871, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System has been a cornerstone of the Service's mission of working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their inhabitants for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The American people, Mr. Chairman, yet their statement seems to be a bit at odds with their stated priorities. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has ranked its funding priorities in this report in the following order: Recovery of species federally listed as threatened or endangered; restoration of imperiled aquatic species; tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities; other propagation programs for native species; and, finally, other propagation programs for non-native species.

Currently, more than 75 percent of the 291 propagation programs within the National Hatchery Systems exist within Priorities 1 through 3. The first of these three make up almost 90 percent of the funding from the National Hatchery System.

The planning report looked at five potential funding scenarios: Level funding; an 11 percent reduction; 15 percent reduction; 24 percent reduction; and a 5 percent increase. The Service concluded that meeting or cutting level funding would require discontinued Service funding for some of the lower priority propagation programs.

Please keep in mind that mitigation hatcheries fall under the Categories 4 and 5, the lowest priority funding priorities. This brings up a serious question. Why should mitigation hatcheries be regarded as such a low priority program to the Fish and Wildlife Service?

I believe stocking the tail waters, streams, lakes, and rivers of America should be a higher priority, providing our Nation's anglers with the recreational enjoyment and opportunities to catch fish is an important service, particularly vital to the economic growth of northeast Georgia.

And just as a side note, it would be devastating for my District Director because he spends most of his life in these trout streams, and this is something very important to him.

It is important to note that the Chattahoochee Hatchery is nearly 90 percent reimbursed from the Army Corps of Engineers and the TVA. Why should the Service choose to de-generate a propagation program that is being reimbursed for and that also provide real economic benefits to rural America?

It is because of their bias toward the Endangered Species Act's related propagation. I recently had the privilege to serve as a member of Chairman Hastings' Endangered Species Act Working Group. My involvement with the Working Group only reinforced

the significant and growing need for Congress to look at this bias and seek solutions to address such misguided policies.

In summation, I support the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery as it plays an integral role in the sustainability of businesses and communities in northeast Georgia, from providing environmental education and public outreach opportunities to visitors, school groups, and various other organizations to facilitating recreational opportunities to 160,000 anglers a year.

Northeast Georgia would not be the same without this facility. I appreciate the great work this Committee is doing to bring light to this issue, and I hope to continue working with this Committee to address Fish and Wildlife Service's bias against mitigation hatcheries.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify, Mr. Chairman, and before I quit, I would like to add a special thank you to Deborah Burger, the Hatchery Manager at Chattahoochee Hatchery for her 36 years of service at that location and congratulate her on her upcoming retirement.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Collins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DOUG COLLINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Thank you Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, and distinguished members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the recent National Fish Hatchery System Planning Report and the Chattahoochee National Forest Fish Hatchery that is located in Georgia's Ninth Congressional District.

Suches, Georgia is a sleepy community in Union County, located high up in the Appalachian Mountains. It is a rural area, without any major stores or banks. One thing that it does have, however, is the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery.

Chattahoochee is a mitigation hatchery, established in 1937, after the numerous dams and reservoirs disrupted the natural flow of fish to the area. It stocks the tail waters of multiple projects for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority with Rainbow Trout for the enjoyment of 160,000 anglers per year. These tail waters would be barren without this facility and the service that they provide.

To be honest, I was more than surprised when I heard that the Fish and Wildlife Service was thinking of closing this hatchery. It is beloved by the community, it shows great return on investment, and it is an economic engine of this rural part of Georgia. This hatchery is a major source of revenue for Suches, and northeast Georgia in general, having generated just over \$30 million of total economic output on just a \$747,000 investment. Talk about bang for your buck, this hatchery delivers.

According to the Planning Report itself, "since its establishment in 1871, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System has been a cornerstone of the Service's mission of working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." The American people, Mr. Chairman. Yet their statement seems to be a bit at odds with their stated priorities.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has ranked its funding priorities in this report in the following order: (1) Recovery of species federally listed as threatened or endangered; (2) Restoration of imperiled aquatic species; (3) Tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities; (4) Other Propagation Programs for Native Species; and finally (5) Other Propagation Programs for Non-Native Species

Currently, more than 75 percent of the 291 propagation programs within the National Hatchery System exist within priorities 1-3. These first three priorities also make up nearly 90 percent of the funding from the National Hatchery System. The planning report looked at five potential funding scenarios: level funding, an 11 percent reduction, a 15 percent reduction, a 24 percent reduction, and a 5 percent increase. The Service concluded that meeting any cut or level funding would require "discontinuing Service funding for some of the lower priority propagation programs."

Please keep in mind that mitigation hatcheries fall under categories four and five, the lowest priority funding priorities.

This brings up a serious question, why should mitigation hatcheries be regarded as such low priority programs to the Fish and Wildlife Service? I believe stocking the tail waters, streams, lakes, and rivers of America should be a higher priority. Providing our Nation's anglers with the recreational enjoyment and opportunity to catch fish is an important service, particularly vital to the economic growth of northeast Georgia.

It is important to note that the Chattahoochee Hatchery is nearly 90 percent reimbursed from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Why would the Service choose to denigrate propagation programs that they are being reimbursed for and that also provide real economic benefits to rural America? It is because of their bias towards Endangered Species Act related propagation. I recently had the privilege to serve as a member of Chairman Hastings' Endangered Species Act Working Group. My involvement with the working group only reinforced significant and growing need for Congress to look at this bias and seek solutions to address such misguided policies.

In summation, I support the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery, as it plays an integral role in the sustainability of businesses and communities in northeast Georgia. From providing environmental education and public outreach opportunities to visitors, school groups, and various other organizations to facilitating recreational opportunities to 160,000 anglers a year, northeast Georgia would not be same without this facility. I appreciate the great work this Committee is doing to bring light to this issue and I hope to continue working with this Committee and its members to address Fish and Wildlife Service's bias against mitigation hatcheries. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to add a special thank you to Deborah Burger, the Hatchery Manager at Chattahoochee hatchery, for her 36 years of service at that location and congratulate her on her upcoming retirement. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Dr. FLEMING. Well, I thank the gentleman, and as is customary, you are certainly released back to your congressional duties. We do appreciate your time and your testimony today.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, Mr. Chairman, this is something very important as you can tell from my testimony, something that strikes at the heart. It's the very nature of our rural culture and people come there to fish. They come for these waters, and then when you take into account the cooperation really between the Corps and the TVA, this is something we really believe needs to be addressed, and I appreciate your willingness to take that on.

Dr. FLEMING. Thank you.

We are now ready for our second panel, which you can go ahead and come forward, panel, as I introduce you.

We are now ready for our second panel which included Mr. David Hoskins, Assistant Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Ms. Diane Parks, Acting Deputy Chief of Operations and Regulations, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Mr. Ed Carter, Executive Director, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Your written testimony will appear in full in the hearing record. So I ask that you keep your oral statements to 5 minutes, as outlined in our invitation letter to you and under Committee Rule 4(a).

Our microphones are not automatic. So please press the button when you are ready to begin.

I also want to explain how our timing lights work. When you begin to speak, our clerk will start the timer and a green light will appear. After 4 minutes a yellow light will appear, and at that time you will begin to conclude your statement. Obviously when you hit

red, we want you to go ahead and conclude so we can move forward with other testimonies.

Mr. Hoskins, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present testimony on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

STATEMENT OF DAVID HOSKINS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FISH AND AQUATIC CONSERVATION, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. HOSKINS. Good morning, Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, and members of the Subcommittee. I am David Hoskins, Assistant Director for Fish and Aquatic Conservation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the National Fish Hatchery System, Strategic Hatchery and Work Force Planning Report.

The Service's National Fish Hatchery System has played a critical role in conserving America's fisheries for more than 140 years. This national and highly specialized network of facilities and employees plays a vital role in the recovery of threatened and endangered species, the restoration of imperiled species and fulfilling our trust obligations to Native American tribes. In addition, it provides fish and other species for stocking into America's waterways helping to sustain economically and recreationally important fisheries.

The National Fish Hatchery System has struggled with declining funding for a number of years. Significant increases in operational costs have contributed to these fiscal challenges.

In fiscal year 2012 alone the system incurred a \$2.1 million shortfall in overall funding and needed to reprogram deferred maintenance funding to cover operational shortfalls and continue fish production.

As a result of these fiscal challenges, the Service assembled a team of experts from across the country to conduct a comprehensive review of the 70 active propagation hatcheries. The purpose of this review was to position hatcheries to meet national aquatic resource conservation needs, operate hatcheries with available funding, identify the highest priority propagation programs and help us make informed management decisions under a range of potential budget scenarios.

The Service established five priorities for the National Fish Hatchery System's propagation programs consistent with the Service's overall mission and priorities: One, recovery of threatened or endangered species; two, restoration of imperiled species; three, tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities; four, other native species; and five, other non-native species.

The review team also developed five different funding scenarios. It is important to note, however, that a report is not a decision document. It offers management options and recommendations to put the system on a more sound and sustainable financial footing.

In that context, the review team recognized that reimbursable funding is an important resource for our hatcheries. I am pleased to inform you that we have had very positive discussions with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority. As a result of increased funding from both of these partners, the Service has made great progress toward full reimbursement for the

operational cost that we incur to produce native and non-native fish for mitigation purposes.

When the report was released in November 2013, the Service announced that we did not intend to close any hatcheries in fiscal year 2014. Recently Congress provided the Service with \$46.5 million to operate the National Fish Hatchery System this fiscal year, substantially more than we had anticipated. However, that level of funding is still not sufficient to fully cover our operational costs for all of our propagation programs at current levels.

The Service is using the report to engage partners and stakeholders, including Congress, State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, tribes and others in a discussion on its major findings and recommendations. Our hope is that by engaging in a transparent and open dialog with our partners and stakeholders we can chart a unified course forward for the National Fish Hatchery System.

This will allow us to operate the system on a sound financial footing and position the system to better meet today's and tomorrow's conservation challenges.

Mr. Chairman, thank you, again, for this opportunity to testify before your Subcommittee today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have on the report and the National Fish Hatchery System.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hoskins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID HOSKINS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR FISH AND AQUATIC CONSERVATION, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Good morning Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, and members of the Subcommittee. I am David Hoskins, Assistant Director for Fish and Aquatic Conservation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), within the Department of the Interior. Thank you for inviting me to testify today on behalf of the Service on the *National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report*.

The Service's National Fish Hatchery System, comprised of 72 National Fish Hatcheries, one Historic National Fish Hatchery, Fish Technology Centers, Fish Health Centers, and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership Program, has played a critical role in conserving America's fisheries for more than 140 years. This national and highly specialized network of facilities and employees not only provides fish and other species for stocking into America's waterways, helping to sustain economically and recreationally important fisheries, it plays a vital role in the recovery of threatened and endangered species, the restoration of imperiled species, and in fulfilling our trust obligations to Native American tribes.

Our work to propagate fish, native mussels, and other aquatic species listed as threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and to restore declining species before they are listed, is part of the Service's larger ongoing effort to conserve and recover native fish and other aquatic species under the ESA. We rely heavily on our National Fish Hatchery System to help fulfill our statutory obligations under the ESA. The Service's work to propagate aquatic species also addresses our responsibilities under other Federal statutes, such as the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as well as mitigation requirements established for individual Federal water resource development projects.

In addition to the conservation mandates established by the ESA and other Federal fish and wildlife statutes, the U.S. Department of the Interior has broad trust responsibilities to Native American Tribes. These include responsibilities specifically or generally required by treaty, statute, or pursuant to a consent decree or court order. By helping to ensure that tribes have continued access to native species important to their way of life, the National Fish Hatchery System also plays an essential role in meeting these trust responsibilities.

The National Fish Hatchery System, however, has struggled with declining funding for a number of years. Significant increases in operational costs for fish food, fuel for distribution vehicles, and energy costs have contributed to these fiscal chal-

allenges. In fiscal year 2012 alone, the National Fish Hatchery System incurred a \$2.1 million shortfall in overall funding, and needed to reprogram Deferred Maintenance funding to cover operational shortfalls and continue fish propagation. The Service realized that this approach was not sustainable into the future.

As a result of those fiscal challenges and other financial issues plaguing the National Fish Hatchery System, the Service assembled a team of experts from across the country in 2012 to conduct a comprehensive review of the 70 active propagation hatcheries. The team was led by the Regional Director in Alaska and included all of our Assistant Regional Directors for Fish and Aquatic Conservation as well as key senior staff in Headquarters.

The purpose of this review was to position hatcheries to meet national aquatic resource conservation needs, operate hatcheries consistent with available funding and without having to borrow from other accounts, identify the highest priority propagation programs, and make informed management decisions under a range of potential budget scenarios. The review team collected and examined detailed information on species produced, staffing, organizational structure, and operational budgets from each of our National Fish Hatchery System propagation programs across all of our propagation hatcheries.

As part of the review, the Service established and ranked the following priorities for the National Fish Hatchery System's propagation programs for fish and other aquatic species consistent with the Service's mission and priorities:

- Recovery of threatened or endangered species.
- Restoration of imperiled species.
- Tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities.
- Other propagation programs for native species.
- Other propagation programs for non-native species.

Through the review, we know that in FY 2012:

- Two hundred and ninety-one propagation programs occurred at the 70 propagation hatcheries;
- The Service's three highest priority categories (recovery, restoration, and tribal) accounted for more than 75 percent of all propagation programs;
- About 90 percent of our limited funds are directed to our three highest priorities; and
- Reimbursable funding is an important resource for the National Fish Hatchery System, especially for propagation programs that provide mitigation for Federal water development projects.

The *National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report* (Report) is the product of that comprehensive review. It is important to note, however, that the Report is not a decision document. It offers management options and recommendations to put the system on a more sound and sustainable financial footing.

The review team developed five different funding scenarios to be considered depending on the level of funding that will be appropriated in the future. Those five scenarios, using FY 2012 as a baseline, are a 5 percent increase, level funding, an 11 percent reduction, a 15 percent reduction, and a 24 percent reduction. Each funding scenario, and the respective changes to propagation programs, is described in the Report. The Report also analyzed staffing data and recommended that we strive to achieve a 65:35 percent ratio of salaries to other operational costs. Currently hatcheries are spending more of their funding on salaries, which leaves less funding available for other operational costs, such as fish food, fuel for distribution, and utilities. With rising operational costs, this ratio was recommended to allow the hatcheries to better absorb increases in operational costs.

One of the findings of the Report is that reimbursable funding is an important resource for our hatcheries. For many years, the Service has been directed by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and our partners, such as the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, to secure full reimbursable funding which include operational costs (e.g. staff salaries, fish food, chemicals, fish distribution, and utilities) so our appropriated dollars could be directed to higher priority activities. We have long-standing reimbursable agreements with the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bonneville Power Administration, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

I am pleased to inform you that we have had very positive discussions with our partners in the Corps and have received additional Corps funding for previously unreimbursed programs since FY 2010. In FY 2014, Congress provided \$4.7 million in Corps funding for mitigation reimbursement. In addition, the Service and the Tennessee Valley Authority recently reached a new 3 year funding agreement through

2016 that will provide \$900,000 to the Service each year. As a result, the Service has made great progress toward full reimbursement for the operational costs that we incur to produce native and non-native fish for mitigation purposes for our partners.

As the Service announced in November 2013 when the Report was released, we do not intend to close any hatcheries in FY 2014. Moreover, Congress provided the Service with \$46,528,000 to operate the National Fish Hatchery System in the recently enacted FY 2014 Omnibus, which is substantially more than we anticipated had sequestration continued into FY 2014. However, that level of funding is still not sufficient to fully cover our operational costs for all of our propagation programs at current levels.

The Service is using the Report to engage partners and stakeholders, including State fish and wildlife agencies, tribes, and others, in a discussion on its major findings and recommendations. We are seeking their input on how we should operate the National Fish Hatchery System more efficiently and within available resources in the future. Taking into consideration their input, current and anticipated funding levels, the costs to operate our existing propagation programs, and the Report's findings and recommendations, we will consider how we can further streamline our operations to better reflect the Service's priorities and bring expenditures in line with available funding. This could conceivably include transferring ownership of additional individual Federal hatchery facilities to the States.

Our hope is that by engaging in a transparent and open dialogue with this Committee and others in Congress, our partners and stakeholders we can chart a unified course forward for the National Fish Hatchery System that not only allows us to operate the system on a sound financial footing but positions the system to better meet today's and tomorrow's conservation challenges.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify before your Committee today. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have on the Report and the National Fish Hatchery System.

Dr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Hoskins.

Ms. Parks, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DIANE PARKS, ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND REGULATORY, HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Ms. PARKS. Thank you.

Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, I am Diane Parks, Deputy Chief of Operations and Regulatory for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the National Fish Hatchery System associated with the Corps' Water Resources Projects.

The Corps recognizes the impacts of water development projects and strives to meet the commitment of offsetting impacts by replacing stocks of native fish where possible or providing non-native sport angling opportunities with support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System.

The Corps also appreciates the significant economic benefits that the sport fishing industry brings to local communities where stocking of hatchery fish into lakes and streams is common practice.

Appendix A of the March 2013 National Fish Hatchery System Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report shows that the Corps is completing over 95 percent of its mitigation requirements and reimbursements for native endangered species management in the Northwest Region 1, which is funded by specific Corps projects, and we will continue to work with the Service to strive to meet 100 percent.

We also concur that the report data from 2012 accurately shows the Corps meeting 80 percent of the mitigation requirements at 17

national fish hatcheries within Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6. These requirements are centrally funded by the Corps' Civil Works Operations and Maintenance appropriations under Fish and Wildlife Operating Fish Hatchery Reimbursement.

Although the hatchery work in the Northwest has been ongoing for decades, this centrally funded program began in 2010 under congressional direction that the Service seek reimbursement for mitigation fish production.

Since 2010, the Corps has worked closely with the Service to produce and release approximately 32 million fish into 45 different receiving waters impacted by the Corps dams. This amount, although not full mitigation, represented the amount the Corps was able to fund by considering all eligible projects, programs, and activities, including significant increases in the cost of biological opinions related to listed endangered species across many programs.

The Corps must annually prioritize investments in the Nation's water resources based on their return to the Nation, which requires us to make difficult decision that affect many program areas. All costs, including any increases in mitigation, must be evaluated closely. The baseline cost of \$4.7 million was an estimate determined by the Service in 2010 to meet 100 percent of its requirements to raise and distribute fish for Corps mitigation.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 includes this amount to be transferred to the Service for production of mitigation fish for the Corps which will meet 100 percent of our mitigation this fiscal year. Even under the constrained fiscal times, the Corps looks forward to continued coordination and collaboration with the Service in meeting our mitigation commitments.

The Corps has been in contact with the Service to improve the Corps' involvement in the process, improve accuracy of funding needs, and to formalize an agreement between the Corps and Service for long-term commitment.

In closing, the Corps is actively engaged in the process to improve and formalize the current partnership with the Service and to ensure the protection and benefits our resources provide to the public.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to testify here today, and I look forward to any questions you or the Ranking Member may have of me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Parks follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIANE PARKS, DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND REGULATORY, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am Diane Parks, Deputy Chief of Operations and Regulatory for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the National Fish Hatchery System associated with Corps water resources projects. The Corps recognizes the impacts of water development projects and strives to meet the commitment of off-setting impacts by, where appropriate, replacing stocks of native fish where possible or providing non-native sport angling opportunities with support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) National Fish Hatchery System. The Corps also appreciates the significant economic benefits that the sport fishing industry brings to local communities where stocking of hatchery fish into lakes and streams is common practice.

Appendix A of the March 2013 National Fish Hatchery System Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report, shows that the Corps is completing over 95 percent of its mitigation requirements and reimbursements for native endangered species

management in the Northwest Region 1 funded by specific Corps projects and we will continue to work with the Service to strive to meet 100 percent. We also do concur that the report data from 2012 accurately shows the Corps meeting 80 percent of the mitigation requirements at the 17 National Fish Hatcheries within Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6. These requirements are centrally funded by the Corps' Civil Works Operation and Maintenance Appropriations under "Fish and Wildlife Operating Fish Hatchery Reimbursement." Although the hatchery work in the Northwest has been ongoing for decades, this centrally funded program began in 2010 in response to the Committee on Appropriations Report 110-187 (Accompanying the Department of Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008), directing the Service to seek reimbursement for mitigation fish production. Since 2010, the Corps has worked closely with the Service to produce and release approximately 32 million fish into 45 different receiving waters impacted by Corps dams. This amount, although not full mitigation, represented the amount the Corps was able to fund, while considering all eligible projects, programs, and activities, including significant increases in cost of Biological Opinions related to listed endangered species, across many programs. The Corps must annually prioritize investments in the Nation's water resources based on their return to the Nation, which requires the agency to make difficult decisions that affect many program areas. All costs, including any increases in mitigation, must be evaluated closely.

The baseline cost of \$4,700,000 was an estimate determined by the Service in 2010 to meet 100 percent of its requirements to raise and distribute fish for Corps mitigation (based on historic numbers). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 includes \$4,700,000 to be transferred to the Service for production of mitigation fish for the Corps, which will meet the 100 percent mitigation this fiscal year.

Even under constrained fiscal times, the Corps looks forward to continued coordination and collaboration with the Service in meeting our mitigation commitments. The Corps has been in contact with the Service to improve the Corps involvement in the process, improve accuracy of funding needs, and to formalize an agreement between the Corps and Service for long term commitment.

In closing, the Corps is actively engaged in the process to improve and formalize the current partnership with the Service and to insure the protection and benefits our resources provide to the public.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Dr. FLEMING. Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Parks.

And finally we have Mr. Ed Carter, who is testifying on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Mr. Carter, you, sir, are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF ED CARTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Mr. CARTER. Good morning, Chairman Fleming and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to see the perspectives from the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery Program and the Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report.

My name is Ed Carter. I'm the Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and I am here today testifying on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for which I serve as a member of the Executive Committee and also serve right now as the President of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was founded in 1902 and it is a professional trade association for the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Our members include the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies from all 50 States, provinces, and the Federal Governments of both the United States, Mexico and Canada.

We promote sound resource management and strengthen our Federal, State and private cooperation in protecting and managing our fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest.

We are very interested in the future of the National Fish Hatchery System and the future changes and what they could mean to the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the constituents that they serve, and our Nation's fisheries.

The State fish and wildlife agencies have a long and valued partnership with the Federal agency in the fisheries management. Fish hatcheries have been and remain important components of many successful fish hatchery restoration and management efforts, as well as offering recreational and significant economic benefits.

The National Fish Hatchery System was established in 1871 by Congress and to conserve fishery resources for future generations, and it is used extensively by State Fish and Wildlife Agencies in supporting State and Federal fisheries managements throughout the country, often in a very cooperative example.

In Tennessee, I will offer as an example, we have 9 fish hatcheries, 10 if you count our endangered species hatchery. We do not meet currently the demand that we have for fishing in our mitigation waters and the loss of any fish would be really devastating for our fisheries as well as the economic benefits that they are associated with.

Recreational fishing and fisheries resources are significant contributors to the economic health of the Nation. The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife and Associated Recreation reported that 31 million Americans participated in recreational fishing which supports more than 587,000 jobs and provides a total economic contribution exceeding \$61 billion.

This economic impact of fish and aquatic conservation programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service was an estimated \$3.56 billion supporting more than 68,000 jobs. In nine of the Southeastern States, for example, \$5 million that is spent on the National Fish Hatchery's stock generated \$239 million in local economic output and supports 3,100 jobs, including \$63 million in total economic benefit. It generates about \$14 million in State and Federal taxes.

Tennessee's Dale Hollow Fish Hatchery returns \$89 for every dollar spent and returns \$5.1 million in State and local taxes in Tennessee alone. As Congressman Roe mentioned earlier, the Erwin Hatchery adds even greater economic benefit as it supports about 10 different States.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has a record of raising issues about the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in operating and managing Federal fish hatcheries. I would like to outline just a few of those.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has Federal responsibility for meeting the mitigation needs of Federal water projects. Since before the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, the Fish and Wildlife Service has had a statutory responsibility to mitigate fisheries' losses and loss of recreational fishing opportunities which result from Federal water development projects, such as dams.

We want to ensure that the Service does not abdicate that responsibility and that water development projects fund these activi-

ties fully. Private development projects must mitigate, and the Federal Government should be a model and follow the same standards.

And Federal hatcheries are not just about mitigation. The States rely on Federal fish hatchery production to support recreational fishing and species recovery. The Association's member States are willing to work with the Service in a national approach to coordinate fish production, taking into account the fish produced by the 50 State and fish and wildlife agencies and the fish produced by the Service to ensure that the most efficient methods for producing fish and recreation mitigations of species and conservation.

We must have a robust and collaborative national effort to meet the country's fish production needs. For instance, in Tennessee we gave \$3.1 million to Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery to help in their restoration efforts.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is very concerned about the potential divestiture of the major portion of the National Fish Hatchery Programs and about the perceived retreat from sport fisheries' partnerships with State agencies and the Federal Hatcheries Report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would be glad to answer any questions that I can answer for you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ED CARTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY, REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Good afternoon Chairman Fleming and members of the Subcommittee, and thank you for inviting me to be with you today to share the perspectives of the State fish and wildlife agencies on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) and the Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report. My name is Ed Carter, and I am the Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, representing the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association). I am a member of the Association's Executive Committee. I also serve as the current President of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Association, founded in 1902, is the professional association for the State fish and wildlife agencies, and our membership includes public agencies charged with the protection and management of North America's fish and wildlife resources. The Association's governmental members include the fish and wildlife agencies of the States, provinces, and Federal Governments of the United States and Canada, and we collaborate with Mexico. All 50 States are members. The Association has been a key organization in promoting sound resource management and strengthening Federal, State, and private cooperation in protecting and managing fish, wildlife, and their habitats in the public interest.

The Association is very interested in the future of the National Fish Hatchery System and what changes to that system could mean to the State fish and wildlife agencies, the constituents they serve, and our Nation's fisheries. Mr. Chairman, the State fish and wildlife agencies have a long and valued partnership with the Federal agencies in fisheries management. Fish hatcheries have been and remain important components of many successful fishery restoration and management efforts. Given our shared responsibilities for the management of fish and other aquatic resources, and the diverse benefits derived by the American public from integrated and efficient hatchery production, we look forward to continuing to work closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure quality fish for restoration and to support diverse recreational and commercial use. Toward that end, we appreciate the opportunity to be here today to explore ways to maintain and improve upon an important tool in our conservation toolbox.

Federal fish hatchery closures and associated activity reductions or modifications, unless carefully coordinated with the States and tribes and methodically approached, could degrade many invaluable fisheries management and conservation projects that are vital to sustaining important fish populations in our Nation's waterways and the jobs the fishery resources support. Healthy waterways and robust

fish populations are vital to the well-being of our society and economy. They provide sustainable fisheries, provide jobs for our citizens, recreational enjoyment for millions, and support many local communities.

BACKGROUND

The National Fish Hatchery System was established in 1871 by Congress to conserve fishery resources for future generations of Americans. Today, the Service's NFHS includes 70 National Fish Hatcheries (NFHs), 9 Fish Health Centers (FHCs), and 6 Fish Technology Centers (FTCs). These facilities are used extensively by some State fish and wildlife agencies. The Federal hatchery system is a key ingredient in supporting State and Federal fisheries management throughout the country. As stated in a recent report by the Service "the [Federal fish hatchery system] is a complex and dynamic network of assets and expertise operating to support the Service's mission."¹

The State fish and wildlife agencies are strong proponents of a healthy Federal fish hatchery system. We believe the Federal hatchery system should not operate or be managed in a vacuum. In effect, the Federal system is a part of a more comprehensive national system that includes the hatcheries operated by State fish and wildlife agencies, other public agencies, and even private enterprise. When you then take into consideration tribal hatcheries, it becomes clear how extensive the network of hatcheries is to meet Federal, State, and tribal needs for recreation, mitigation, and species recovery.

The State fish and wildlife agencies are partners with the Service and tribes in producing fish for our Nation's interests and needs. Some State fish and wildlife agencies rely heavily on Federal hatchery grown fish or eggs to provide for recreational angling opportunities and restoration work. Other States may not use Federal fish hatcheries at all, or will partner with Federal fish hatcheries to address a specific need. I should mention that some State hatcheries produce threatened or endangered species to assist our Federal partners in delisting efforts and help recover fisheries systems that are important to the State. Consequently, a shift in any Federal fish hatchery will have broad implications for many more interests than just the Service and its workforce planning efforts. The Service should closely collaborate with the States and tribes when the agency contemplates changes to a fish hatchery or fish health center including closures, change in production, or shifting priorities which, to date, has not occurred.

Since at least 1995, we have revisited the concept of changes in Federal fish hatchery modifications, priorities, closures, and the like several times either through Service proposals or the President's budget and each seemingly without due consideration of impacts on others outside the Service that could be affected by such actions.

ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR NATION'S FISHERIES

Recreational fishing and fishery resources are significant contributors to the economic health of the Nation. The 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation found 33.1 million individuals participating in recreational fishing. The economic impact from recreational fishing alone supports more than 587,000 jobs and provides a total economic contribution exceeding \$61 billion.² The estimated economic impact of the Fish and Aquatic Conservation program of the FWS also provides a strong indication of the value of the United States' aquatic resource assets. In 2010 the program's activities yielded an estimated \$3.56 billion in economic output, supporting more than 68,000 jobs and \$301 million in substitution value for subsistence activity.³

Federal investment in fish hatcheries produces a strong return on investment and is a model of an economic multiplier effect. In the nine Southeastern States alone, for example, the \$5 million spent on NFH-stocked fish generates at least \$239 million in local economic output and supports 3,100 jobs with incomes totaling \$63 million. This activity generates \$14 million in State and Federal taxes.⁴

The NFHS relies a great deal on volunteer work, which significantly cuts program costs and allows important funding dollars to be used directly for the rearing and

¹*National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report*, March 2013, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, page 6.

²Southwick Associates, 2011, *The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States*. Report prepared for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, page 8.

³Joseph J. Charbonneau and James Caudill, 2010, *An Assessment of Economic Contributions from Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

⁴Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council, 2010, *Programmatic Evaluation: Activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program, FY 2005-2009*, page 64.

release of hatchery fish. Additionally, these hatcheries are a career gateway for rural and Native American youth, helping to diversify Service staff and invest youth in the stewardship of our environment at an early age. Through the use of volunteers and the implementation of the Youth Conservation Corps initiative, these hatcheries are avenues for introducing people to outdoors, outdoor skills and conservation. They increase recruitment and retention in the participation of traditional outdoor activities.

Several of the agencies that rely on these fish stocking operations, including the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), have failed to fully reimburse the Service for its efforts. If the Service is not fully reimbursed by these two agencies, the large decrease in funding that is anticipated for the NFHS will be felt in local economies, as nationwide hatchery efforts support over 8,000 jobs and result in almost \$35 million in State and local tax revenue every year.⁵ The best remedy for this unfortunate situation is for Congress to either mandate that these partner agencies fully reimburse the Service for their share of the hatchery operating costs or provide the Service with the necessary funding within the NFHS's budget to keep these facilities operating, complementary to the program's base funding, while reimbursements are negotiated. The Association supports 100 percent reimbursement to the Service by other Federal agencies.

Finally, we would add that this is not an issue that has only Federal level impacts. States depend on these hatcheries to provide fish and recreational fishing opportunities, which support jobs in rural areas that depend on the recreational angler for their livelihood. Over the years the Service has cut hatcheries through closures and transfers to States. The hatchery program has for some years been at the minimum staffing and size necessary to fulfill responsibilities, as well as recreational opportunities and in some States any additional losses would be devastating.

TENNESSEE: AN EXAMPLE

Tennessee relies on Service hatcheries to maintain trout fisheries across the State. The Federal hatcheries have become a critical component of statewide trout management providing over half the trout produced for the State. Most of these fish are provided for stocking into waters associated with Federal water development projects. In a typical year Federal hatcheries provide about 300,000 pounds or 1.3 million trout to fisheries that have been permanently altered by Federal power projects. Fisheries for native fish no longer exist at these locations due to habitat loss associated with project operations. Trout are stocked to mitigate for this loss. The mitigation trout fisheries include 8 large reservoirs and 13 rivers located in middle to east Tennessee. Many of Tennessee's most famous rivers, like the Caney Fork, Hiwassee, Clinch, Watauga, South Holston, and Tellico Rivers rely on the Federal mitigation stocking program.

Tennessee's view is that the Federal Government is responsible for mitigation stocking at Federal water development projects, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Private power companies are held to these standards throughout the Nation, and the Federal Government should be a model participant in the mitigation model, not an objector. The Service once had a proud tradition of performing the mitigation role for the Federal Government. The Service's strategic plans and annual reports rightfully touted these successful stocking programs for decades. Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery in Celina, TN was built in 1965 to perform this role that it continues to this day. Erwin National Fish Hatchery, in Erwin, TN provides eggs for mitigation trout at both Federal and State hatcheries across the Nation.

The *2013 Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report* states that the Service has chosen to discontinue this role. This decision should not give the Federal Government as a whole a pass on its mitigation responsibility. The funding could come from Federal appropriations to the Service or by payments from USACE and TVA. The mechanism for this funding is a Federal matter that the States should not need to design or negotiate.

The Federal Government should pay for mitigation. If it is decided that the Service will no longer produce mitigation trout, then those hatcheries and an annual allocation to operate those hatcheries should be transferred to the States or private hatcheries to perform that role for the Federal Government. Any conveyance of Federal mitigation hatcheries to State agencies should include legislation that ensures annual operating funds for that facility will be provided by the Federal Government. The States and anglers that support them should not pay to operate these Federal mitigation hatcheries.

⁵ Joseph J. Charbonneau and James Caudill, 2010, *An Assessment of Economic Contributions from Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Aside from the mitigation responsibility, the Service hatcheries should be operated to maintain the economic benefits that have been created over the decades. These fisheries benefit a variety of local businesses and stimulate tourism in Tennessee. The economic analysis of Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery reports that for every dollar spent the economic return is \$88.76, nearly all of this is realized in Tennessee. The program annually supports 867 jobs, \$22.5 million in wages, \$41.7 million in retail sales, and \$5.1 million in Federal and State taxes. Erwin National Fish Hatchery influences a broader region of the country and as such is an even greater economic driver. Erwin returns \$72.95 for each tax dollar spent and supports 3,442 jobs, \$89.5 million in wages, \$166 million in retail sales, and \$20.7 million in taxes.

AREAS OF CONCERN

The Association has a record of raising issues through the years about the role of the Service in operating and managing Federal fish hatcheries. I will outline these issues briefly and then return to elaborate on each point.

1. The Service has Federal responsibility for meeting the mitigation needs of Federal water development projects. Since before the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, the Service has had statutory responsibility to mitigate fisheries losses and loss of recreational fishing opportunities which result from Federal water development projects. We want to ensure that the Service does not abdicate this responsibility and that the water development project agencies fund these activities fully.

2. Federal hatcheries are not just about mitigation. The States rely on Federal fish hatchery production to support recreational fishing and species recovery. The Association's member States are willing to work with the Service on a national approach to coordinate fish production, taking into account the fish produced by the 50 State fish and wildlife agencies and the fish produced by the Service to ensure the most efficient methods for producing fish for recreation, mitigation, and species conservation. We must have a robust and collaborative national effort to meet the Nation's fish production needs and restoration potential now and into the future. Furthermore, Service fish health centers are frequently used by States to test for diseases, pathogens and genetic characteristics which is critical information for fisheries managers.

3. Proposals to close or transfer fish hatcheries or reduce their production happen every several years. From our perspective these cycles seem to signal that the Service places a low priority on fish production compared to other non-fishery program areas. From the States' perspective, the Service's fish and aquatic programs are a significant priority. Hatchery production is one of the three legs of the fishery management stool alongside habitat conservation and harvest management.

4. The Association has always expressed concern about using Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (or Wallop-Breaux) administrative (non-project) funds to transition divested hatcheries to the States. Fortunately, there are no recent discussions about using Sport Fish Restoration funds to transfer hatcheries to the States, but the suggestion was made in the past during similar proposed hatchery changes, and we want to ensure that any future discussion avoids this trap. The Wallop-Breaux user pay/user benefit system was designed to enhance fisheries and recreational fisheries opportunities but not to divest Federal agencies of their mitigation responsibilities. We believe that non-project funds were intended to be used for Federal administration of the Sport Fish restoration program to the States, *not* to substitute for fish and aquatic conservation operational funding deficits at the Federal level.

5. A big part of meeting the Nation's fish production requirements is the availability of drugs that prevent disease or safely sedate fish during handling. Under the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership run by the Service from its offices in Bozeman, Montana, State agencies collaborate with the Service and the Food and Drug Administration to approve drugs for fish culture. This program is a high priority to the State fish and wildlife agencies and we remain concerned that the Service intends to turn this Federal program into a cost-recovery center using the States as primary funders. Drug approval efforts are a Federal requirement and this program should be fully-funded by the agency.

Federal Responsibility for Fisheries Mitigation

Statutory mandates for the Service's efforts to mitigate the impacts of Federal water development projects, as well as activities authorized under FERC licenses or by Section 9, 10, 13 and 404 permits, are very broad. The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act requires that fish and wildlife be given *equal* consideration with other project purposes in making decisions about Federal water projects and license or permit applications. Other mandates and authorities for the Service's involvement in mitigation activities associated with Federal water projects as well as with feder-

ally licensed or permitted alteration of navigable waters include the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, the Federal Power Act, the Clean Water Act, the Mitchell Act, the Water Resources Development Act of 1976, and other statutes. In addition to these statutory requirements and authorities, NEPA regulations also require that mitigation measures be considered in environmental impact statements for significant Federal activities and development initiatives. Hence there is a substantial mandate for the Service's involvement in identifying mitigation requirements for all Federal water development initiatives as well as federally licensed or permitted activities and in ensuring that mitigation measures are included in projects when they are planned, constructed and become operational.⁶

The Association is concerned with the Service's apparent withdrawal from these statutorily mandated mitigation responsibilities. The quid pro quo for these Federal water development projects has been that losses to local fisheries and diminished recreational opportunities would be mitigated by the establishment, funding, and administration (by the Federal Government) of fish hatcheries. Longstanding Federal policy has been that the mitigation must be continued for the life of the project and as long afterwards as the effects of the project persist. In some cases, then, the mitigation should continue in perpetuity. The Service's proposal seems to signal an abdication of these responsibilities or, at a minimum, an attempt to transfer those responsibilities (without funding) to the States or others.

Recreational Fish and Species Recovery Production

The responsibility for management of many fish populations rests with States. However, the migratory nature of many native species, recovery needs of species listed under the Endangered Species Act and mitigation obligations resulting from Federal water development actions place considerable responsibilities in the hands of Federal fisheries management agencies. Shared jurisdiction that has evolved over many decades, under the almost constant pressure of budget constraints at State and Federal levels, has created an efficient system that delivers quality fish for a variety of purposes. State hatcheries focus heavily, but not exclusively, on fish production to supplement stocks for recreational fishing purposes. Some State hatcheries produce federally threatened or endangered species for restoration and recovery efforts. Federal hatcheries focus on native species restoration, rehabilitation through the stocking of fish and eggs, meeting mitigation responsibilities for Federal water development projects, federally threatened or endangered species for restoration and recovery efforts, and developing and maintaining brood stocks of various and sometimes unique genetic strains. Over the years, the States have also come to rely on the Federal hatcheries, fish health centers, and fish technical centers for technical assistance and scientific expertise in a variety of areas. While it may appear at first glance that the system includes redundancy among agencies this is not the case. Neither the States nor the Federal hatcheries and facilities alone could geographically or functionally satisfy the diverse needs for fish, or provide the collective expertise currently supplied by the sum total of the current system.

Looking forward, we anticipate continued need to focus on public fish hatcheries as an essential tool in sound fisheries management. Hatcheries will continue to play a role in protection and restoration of native fish populations and supplementation of natural populations to support valuable recreational and commercial fisheries. Today, the States, Federal partners and others are launching ambitious new efforts to protect and enhance fish habitat. While we have seen the declines of much fish habitat across the country, we have also seen examples where habitat previously lost to fish has recovered to the point where it once again supports valuable fisheries. In many of those cases, population enhancement through hatcheries has played a critical role in restoring those stocks and the fisheries that depend upon them.

One close by example is that of shad recovery in the Chesapeake Bay. Following fish passage and water quality improvements, waters once lost to anadromous shad runs were reopened. Yet fish populations had declined to the point where active restoration was required to take full advantage of potential habitats. Through a scientific, careful and consistent restocking effort, native runs of naturally reproducing American and hickory shad have been restored to many tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Now, recovering populations in rivers like the Potomac are being utilized to gather eggs for further restoration work in the James and Rappahannock Rivers. Much of this work has occurred at the Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery in Virginia. Similar success stories are unfolding on the Great Lakes with lake trout

⁶U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1985. Fisheries Resources Program. *Statement of Responsibilities and Role*, page 6.

and coaster brook trout, in the Southwest, where endangered Apache trout populations in Arizona could become the first native fish species to be removed from the endangered species list, and in many other places around the United States.

In addition to filling ecological niches once almost lost, these and other species support revived and growing recreational fisheries that provide real local economic benefits. In addition, recovering fish populations instill in anglers and other conservationists a sense of progress. Recovering fish populations reward difficult conservation choices and pave the way for continued commitment to cleaning up our waterways and protecting the integrity of watersheds all across the country.

The current diversity of Federal fish hatcheries and facilities, functions and fish they produce appears to meet the intent of Congress—to conserve fishery resources for future generations of Americans. Healthy fisheries and aquatic ecosystems depend upon the diversity of species within a system to survive and thrive. Collective propagation efforts that solely focus on one end of the spectrum, without attention paid to other species critical to the system as a whole, will not recover and thrive to ensure healthy fish resources for generations to come.

Prioritization of Fish Production

The Association realizes the current fiscal challenges our Nation faces is great, and priorities need to be established to maximize every taxpayer dollar spent, which includes setting priorities for the Federal fish hatchery system. Some Federal fish hatcheries serve multiple purposes and multiple States, even in areas outside their Fish and Wildlife Service Region. This requires a more holistic evaluation and discussion about the future of our Federal hatcheries. By working together we can determine what changes are appropriate for warm and cold water Federal hatcheries when considering the fisheries needs of those areas. To avoid unintended consequences, efficiently use taxpayer dollars, smartly integrate State hatcheries when possible, and address the needs of the States, tribes and Federal agencies we must initiate a national dialogue across regions and borders to develop a well-informed plan for the future of our Nation's State and Federal fish hatcheries and health centers and ultimately our Nation's fisheries. Only by working together with our Federal partners can we find opportunities, solutions and overcome the challenges that face our current fisheries to conserve these precious resources for the benefit of our Nation's future.

Conveyance: Is It an Option?

One apparent solution to some of our Nation's Federal funding challenges and the Federal fish hatchery situation, in particular, is to convey some of the responsibilities to the States. While it may seem logical to transfer a Federal fish hatchery to State management control for continued operation, in reality it is not always an option. Some States may wish to assume responsibility of a Federal hatchery; others do not have the funds, capacity, or ability to do so. Because of the age of most of the Federal fish hatcheries, some States may wish to add to existing infrastructure of their own State hatcheries rather than assume the maintenance requirements of older Service facilities. Therefore, the option of conveyance from the Service to a State will vary from State to State. However, if a State does choose to assume management and production responsibilities of a Federal fish hatchery, the State and the Service must concur on the transfer specifications.

The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership

The Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership Program (AADAP) of the Service serves an essential and unique Federal role in drug approvals for public and tribal activities in aquaculture and fisheries management. AADAP currently provides 21 Investigational New Animal Drugs (INAD) that would not be otherwise available to control stress in our Nation's fish hatcheries and in the wild, initiate spawning for key species, and reduce preventable disease outbreaks. The program provides services to 48 States including 237 public programs and 38 State fish and wildlife agencies.

The national INAD program managed by AADAP is also essential to the restoration, recovery, and management activities of State, Federal and tribal fish and wildlife agencies for 40 threatened and endangered (T&E) species and numerous other native species of concern. For example, the States assist the Service in managing its Federal obligations under the Endangered Species Act and use drugs to treat federally-listed threatened and endangered species while they are propagated in State operated hatcheries and in field based fishery management. Federally recognized treaty tribes use drugs to manage fish production for subsistence and traditional uses.

The State fish and wildlife agencies believe AADAP is an irreplaceable partner in a collaborative aquatic drug approval effort that includes State fish and wildlife

agencies, the Service, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA–NMFS), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), private aquaculture and numerous drug companies.

In 2013, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council released its *Strategic Vision for Fish and Aquatic Resource Conservation in the Fish and Wildlife Service* which reinforced the “essential and unduplicated services” AADAP provides to the FWS and its partners.

The Association encourages the committee to ensure that any effort to maintain the hatchery system also maintains the drug approval program that is essential to Federal, State, and tribal hatchery production.

CLOSING

In summary Mr. Chairman, the Association is very concerned about the potential divestiture of a major portion of the National Fish Hatchery program, and is concerned about the perceived retreat from sport fisheries partnerships with State agencies needing Federal hatcheries support. Major hatchery closures will seriously disrupt ongoing Federal-State cooperative fishery management programs, local economies, and the system of funding Sport Fish conservation itself. We also believe that this report provides a departure from the Federal responsibility to ensure mitigation for Federal water related development projects.

If divestiture of hatcheries is required due to budget redirection or transfer of funds to other Service programs, these reasons must be openly discussed and defended. If closure is unavoidable, strong transitional support must be offered to States and tribes. The Association would like to work with the States, tribes, and Service on a national approach to our fish hatchery system as a whole, including fish health centers and AADAP, to ensure the collective structure meets the needs of current and future conservation efforts.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the attention you are devoting to maintaining and enhancing a system crucial to fishery conservation work across the country. We strongly believe that the States, anglers, and the whole American public benefit from the good work of the national fish hatcheries. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspectives with you today, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

Dr. FLEMING. I thank you, Mr. Carter.

At this point we will begin Member questioning of the witnesses to allow all Members to participate and to ensure we can hear from all of our witnesses today, Members are limited to 10 minutes for their questions. However, if Members have additional questions, we can always have another round.

Therefore, I recognize myself for 10 minutes.

Mr. Hoskins, I understand you have only been Assistant Director for Fisheries for the last 8 months. During that time, have you visited the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery in Louisiana?

Mr. HOSKINS. No, I have not.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Are you familiar with the fact that for over 80 years this warm water hatchery has provided Louisiana residents with millions of native channel fish, bluegill, largemouth bass, and sunfish?

The stocking and the catching of these fish has generated tens of millions of dollars in economic activity. Under your workplace planning report, what happens to these recreational raised fish if hatchery funding is level in fiscal year 2015?

Mr. HOSKINS. In the report, as you know, we did a breakdown of individual propagation programs, 291 in number, across our 70 propagation hatcheries. The statistics in the report are that 18 percent of the production was for recovery of fresh water mussels at Natchitoches, 37 percent for alligator gar restoration, 29 percent for restoration of alligator snapping turtle, and the remaining 18

percent was for the production of native non-mitigation, not fully reimbursed recreational fish.

We are in the process right now of working to allocate the funding that we received from Congress this year, fiscal year 2014, out to our regions, and once we have provided them with those allocated funding amounts, then we would be working with the individual regions, including Region 4, to assess how we use those funds for the existing propagation programs across all 70 propagation hatcheries in the 291 propagation programs.

Dr. FLEMING. But the question was specifically about the Natchitoches Hatchery. So what happens to it?

Mr. HOSKINS. So as I tried to explain, we are providing the funding that we receive from Congress in the omnibus out to the individual regions, and then the regions would work within their region to decide how to best use that funding for the hatcheries within that region, including in this case Natchitoches.

Dr. FLEMING. Do you have any specific plans downstream of what happens, how the funding gets to specifically Natchitoches and whether there will be adequate funds to keep Natchitoches open?

Mr. HOSKINS. We do not have any intention of closing any hatcheries, the 70 propagation hatcheries that were the subject of the report in this year, and so we are going to be working with the regions to assess how we allocate the existing funding that has been substantially increased by Congress, for which we are very appreciative across the——

Dr. FLEMING. But now which year are we talking about?

Mr. HOSKINS. 2014.

Dr. FLEMING. All right, but the question was about 2015.

Mr. HOSKINS. Well, at this point the President just sent up a request for increased funding above what Congress provided in 2014 for 2015, and so depending upon how much funding the Congress appropriates in 2015, we would go through a similar process of allocating those funds out to the region and then making a case-by-case determination about how that affects individual propagation programs across our 70 hatcheries.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. What if the funding is decreased by, say, 5 percent? How will that affect the Natchitoches hatchery?

Mr. HOSKINS. Well, I cannot speak to the specifics of one hatchery, but as reflected in the report, as the amount of funding goes down, there is an increased effect with respect to our capacity to continue the existing propagation programs, and what the report tried to do is look at how, under five budget scenarios, 5 percent increase, level funding, 11 percent decrease, a 15 percent decrease and a 24 percent decrease. That would or could affect individual propagation programs on a hatchery-by-hatchery basis, and those are identified by hatchery in Appendix A of the report.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Did the Service undertake an economic analysis before it terminated the 50 year old rainbow trout stocking program at the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery in the State of Arizona?

Mr. HOSKINS. My understanding is that the problems at Willow Beach are related to pipeline repair. We did get estimates on what

it would cost to repair that pipeline, and we do not currently have the funding in our maintenance budget to make that repair.

Dr. FLEMING. But was an economic analysis done?

Mr. HOSKINS. It was not based on an economic analysis. It was based on the cost to repair the pipeline.

Dr. FLEMING. So the answer is no. That is all I want to establish. Yes or no, was there an economic analysis done? You are telling me that it was not done.

Mr. HOSKINS. No, there was an economic analysis insofar as we looked at the cost of repairs and our capacity to pay for it, but it did not look—

Dr. FLEMING. No, no. What I mean by that is an economic analysis of the impact on the community, not the pipeline.

Mr. HOSKINS. The answer is no.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. That was what I was looking for.

Does that mean that the Service will not consider the economic impacts to a State or local community before terminating any of the 47 propagation programs that raise native and non-native fish for recreational purposes?

Mr. HOSKINS. The report, as you know, established five priorities based on the broader mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the need for the hatchery system to meet today's conservation challenges. It did not expressly look at economic impacts of those changes on local communities.

Dr. FLEMING. So basically the Service does not care what the economic impact is to the communities.

Mr. HOSKINS. No, I did not say that. I said that the development of the priorities.

Dr. FLEMING. So it is very low priority then or no priority, I guess. You said there is a group of priorities, and it is not in that group of priorities. To me the only way I can interpret that is that the Service either does not care or hardly cares what the impact is on the communities.

Mr. HOSKINS. The Service is operating a hatchery system at the time that the report was written for which it did not have adequate funding, and because of that we were forced to take a look at the system, establish priorities, and begin to assess how we would bring the function and expenses in line with available funding.

That meant that we needed to set priorities and look to implement those priorities across the system.

Dr. FLEMING. Well, I mean, let us face it. Adequate funding is subject to perception. Obviously, there is no way Congress could ever give you unlimited funding. So whatever defined funding you have, and by the way, as I understand it, Congress has actually funded at higher levels than requested by the Administration in past years. So I think we are doing more than our share of work to make sure funding is there.

So the question it comes down to is priority, and from what you are telling me I think you said five priorities, a list of five?

Mr. HOSKINS. Yes.

Dr. FLEMING. And is economic impact on the community, is that among that list of five priorities?

Mr. HOSKINS. No. The priorities are focused on, in order, threatened and endangered species, restoration of imperiled species, trust

and tribal responsibilities, production of native fish and production of non-native fish.

Within those latter two categories we did place an emphasis on mitigation production to the extent that we also receive reimbursement from our partners, like the Corps and TVA, and as I mentioned in my testimony, we made great strides in receiving the funding that we need to produce those mitigation—

Dr. FLEMING. OK, OK. But, again, back to priorities, I mean, just to kind of end this question, I think we would have to both agree that impact, economic impact, on the community is at best a low priority.

Number six here, I find that a remarkable answer in light of the fact that the Service frequently brags that National Wildlife Refuges are economic engines for local communities. In the case of the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery, and I suspect many other hatcheries, that is exactly true. They are economic engines.

Yet unlike a refuge, a hatchery does seem to matter. Please explain this obvious disconnect in refuges versus hatcheries.

Mr. HOSKINS. We are cognizant of the beneficial economic impact that production of fish generates for the community and in terms of recreational fishing. We are in the process right now of reaching out to our stakeholders, including the States, the tribes, local Federal agency representatives and nonprofit organizations to get input on the report, including the priorities in the report. We are going to take a look at where we go from here based on the input that we receive and the funding that we have not only this year but in future years.

Dr. FLEMING. All right. What about Mojave County, Arizona? Did you reach out to them, their community, before shutting down the hatchery?

Mr. HOSKINS. Did we reach out to Mojave County before shutting down the hatchery?

Dr. FLEMING. Did you let them know? Did you contact them in any way and let them know what was coming?

Mr. HOSKINS. We have not shut down the hatchery.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. You terminated the Rainbow Trout Program.

Mr. HOSKINS. Because of a broken pipeline that did not provide us with the water that we needed to sustain the propagation of the trout.

Dr. FLEMING. But did you tell them ahead of time is what I am asking.

Mr. HOSKINS. No, I do not think we did tell them ahead of time.

Dr. FLEMING. Apparently they found out in the newspaper.

Mr. HOSKINS. The pipeline broke, and we do not have the funds to repair it. The hatchery continues to function and is producing other species under other propagation programs.

I met with a representative from the county only yesterday to discuss where we were, and I have a follow-up meeting with an engineer from their county next week in Denver along with a representative from the State Fish and Wildlife Agency. We are interested in working with them to see whether we can fix the pipeline, but at this point we do not have the funds in the deferred maintenance account to cover it.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. My time is up. I yield to Mr. Sablan for 10 minutes.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Before I go into some of my prepared questions, Mr. Hoskins, we have 72 Federal hatcheries. How many hatcheries throughout the country, Federal, State, tribal and so forth, do we have?

Mr. HOSKINS. I do not know the number of State hatcheries. Perhaps Mr. Carter could answer that question better than I can, but your numbers on the Federal side are correct.

Mr. SABLAN. Let me go through my questions first. Mr. Carter, good morning, sir.

Mr. Roe and Mr. Collins earlier testified and cited a positive economic impact of Federal fish hatcheries. Do you agree with them, with my Republican colleagues that this kind of direct spending by the Federal Government can benefit businesses and the economy?

Mr. CARTER. Absolutely. There are several examples on both the State hatchery side and the Federal hatchery side that lends that credibility.

Mr. SABLAN. And so while we have you here, we had a hearing last week, and I would like to ask you a question about a bill that was the subject of that hearing. It is H.R. 3105, the Aquaculture Risk Reduction Act. While the bill purportedly reduces some undemonstrated risk to the aquaculture industry, it seems to pose a very real risk to the States' ability to protect themselves from invasive and injurious species.

Does AFWA agree that H.R. 3105 would undermine the States' prevention and enforcement efforts with respect to this species?

Mr. CARTER. The Association has had some remarks and some conversations that dealt with the possibility of States' authority if the bill were to go forward. We totally recognize the problems that exist in interstate commerce, especially where species are going across State lines, and even more so where there is a danger of some type of invasive species which all the States are battling in one way or another.

So we recognize both sides of the issue and would like to have some ongoing dialog about ways that we could strengthen what the intent of the bill is.

Mr. SABLAN. All right. And you also noted, Mr. Carter, in your testimony that the Federal hatchery system has long been at minimum staffing and size necessary to fulfill service responsibilities, including support of recreational fishing, and that in some States any additional losses would be devastating.

What level of funding do you think is necessary to support a fully functioning hatchery system?

Mr. CARTER. I do not have an exact amount of money, and it would differ with each hatchery as to what their specific function would be. The ones that I am most familiar with in Tennessee, Dale Hallow and Erwin, both could operate at the level that they are currently operating if fully funded at the level that they are expecting from their partners or from other appropriations through the Congress.

So I think with the amount that is there now, they could function. Obviously the part that would need some help is in the main-

tenance. Some of the facilities go back for many years, even some back to the CCC days.

Mr. SABLAN. All right, and we have established that we have 72 Federal hatcheries, Mr. Carter. Do you know the number, the additional number we have in terms of State, tribal and other hatcheries throughout the country besides the 72?

Mr. CARTER. This is an estimate on my behalf. I cannot have an exact number, but I understand it is somewhere in the neighborhood of about 100, not necessarily equally distributed by each State.

Mr. SABLAN. So 100 plus the 72, say, 200 hatcheries throughout the country?

Mr. CARTER. I would say that is close.

Mr. SABLAN. All right. And does anyone have any idea how much money is spent in all of these operations combined, Federal, State, tribal? Anybody have any idea?

TVA also apparently spends money on these things, I understand.

Before I go back to Mr. Hoskins, Ms. Parks, we have heard testimony numerous times before in this Committee that aquatic invasive species, including diseases, pose an enormous threat to fresh water ecosystems and fisheries. Can you please discuss the Corps' experience with invasive species?

Ms. PARKS. The Corps does have an invasive species program, but I do not have any specifics here with me today, but I can surely get that to you if you need it.

Mr. SABLAN. Would you please provide the Committee with that?

Ms. PARKS. Absolutely.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you.

Back to Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Hoskins, do invasive species undermine the work being done by the Fish and Wildlife Service in the hatchery system and elsewhere?

Mr. HOSKINS. Yes, they do. Of course, the goal with respect to our top priorities are to recover threatened and endangered species and to restore species that are imperiled before they need to be listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

And in part, we depend on our propagation programs at our 70 propagation hatcheries to help us with that, but we are also trying to combat the introduction and establishment of invasive species and work with our partners to improve habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.

Some examples of invasive species that can have impacts on populations of aquatic species that are being recovered through our propagation work include sea lamprey in the Great Lakes; that effect Service reared lake trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon; whirling disease caused by a parasite that can have impacts on hatchery-reared trout species; and of course, quagga and zebra mussels that can impact not only native mussels, but clog our systems, our water treatment systems that we rely on to operate our fish hatcheries, like Willow Beach in Arizona.

Mr. SABLAN. Let me ask you. There is a shortfall, about a gap of shall we say \$2 billion. The President's budget includes the \$2.1 billion to close the short gap. If that was to be approved by Con-

gress, you would not close any fisheries in fiscal year 2015, would you?

Mr. HOSKINS. As you noted, the President's budget asks for \$48.6 million for hatchery operations, but it also, I think, is reflected in the request. We believe that still may require us to assess individual propagation programs in line with the report and the input that we receive from our stakeholders, and we may move forward with making adjustments in individual propagation programs across our hatchery system even at that higher funding level.

Mr. SABLAN. This is getting difficult, but you are going to have enough money to fix that pipe, Mr. Hoskins, will you not?

Mr. HOSKINS. The funding as I understand it to fix the pipe would need to come from either the construction account or the deferred maintenance account, and the numbers that we have been discussing so far this morning are focusing on the operations account for the day-to-day operations of our hatchery, and so it is a separate question.

Mr. SABLAN. Well, thank you very much.

I yield my time back. Thank you. Thank you very much, everyone.

Mr. HOSKINS. Thank you.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. The gentleman yields back.

And I have a few more questions. Why do we not go back to 5 minutes and we can pick up if Mr. Sablan wants to ask some more as well. Now I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Carter, I appreciate the role of State hatcheries. However, are we talking about a Federal statutory responsibility under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, that they are trying to terminate?

Mr. CARTER. That is a question that we have actually been looking at ourselves to try to determine what those statutory responsibilities are and whether or not they actually can be abdicated in some other way.

We believe that some clarifying legislation or some kind of clarifying opinion would help greatly in knowing what role Fish and Wildlife Service can utilize as they go forward in their decisions to change their hatchery operations or in some cases to close or severely curtail their operations.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Thank you.

Ms. Parks, what is the total number of national fish hatcheries that has an Army Corps of Engineers presence?

Ms. PARKS. Well, dam-wise, at the dams we have got about 37 dams that are served by 17 fish hatcheries that are part of the combined program I spoke about. Out in the Pacific Northwest, we have four dams out there that are covered by—oh, that is right—eight dams and four fish hatcheries.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Thank you.

Could the Corps of Engineers simply walk away from its mitigation responsibilities?

Ms. PARKS. Not that I know of, sir, no.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Am I reading your testimony correctly that as a result of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, the Corps of Engineers has now met its 100 percent mitigation responsibility for the current fiscal year?

Ms. PARKS. Yes, sir.

Dr. FLEMING. OK. Well, that all the questions I have. I will be happy to yield to the gentleman.

He says he has no further questions. If not, I would like to thank you for your valuable testimony today, panel. Members of the Subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses, and we ask you to respond to these in writing. The hearing record will be open for ten days to receive these responses.

Before closing, I would ask unanimous consent to submit for the hearing record statements by the Chairman and District 3 Supervisor of the Mojave County Board of Supervisors on the sudden and unjustified end of the Rainbow Trout Program at the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery and its devastating impact on their county.

[Letters submitted for the record by Dr. Fleming from the Mojave County Board of Supervisors follow:]

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM THE MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

P.O. BOX 7000,
700 WEST BEALE STREET,
KINGMAN, ARIZONA, FEBRUARY 27, 2014.

The Honorable JOHN FLEMING, CHAIRMAN,
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN FLEMING:

On behalf of Mohave County, Arizona, I wish to sincerely thank the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs for allowing us to voice and commit to record, in writing, Mohave County's most vehement objection to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's unilateral decision to terminate production of rainbow trout at the Willow Beach National Mitigation Fish Hatchery. In voicing our objection, Mohave County wishes to bring to this Committee's attention the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's efforts to disingenuously refuse to recognize the Willow Beach Hatchery as a "mitigation hatchery" and to put forth other false, misleading or misrepresented information to further justify the trout hatchery's closure. Lastly, Mohave County wishes this Committee to take into consideration the severe economic impact the closing of the Willow Beach trout hatchery will have on the State of Arizona, Mohave County and to our river communities who have built a substantial amount of their economies around sports fishing and related recreational activities along the Colorado River.

In a letter to The Honorable United States Senator John McCain dated February 14, 2014, David Hoskins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Director, stated the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery was established as a "non-mitigation hatchery". On that same date, during a public Board of Supervisor's meeting, Stewart Jacks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Regional Director, also referred to the Willow Beach as a "non-mitigation hatchery." Mohave County believes these statements represent a concerted effort to rewrite history to avoid the Service's mitigation obligations to our river communities and to the State of Arizona.

The Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery was established as a "mitigation hatchery" to produce a fishery in the cold water habitat created by the construction of Hoover Dam. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated April 24, 1959, established the fish-cultural station for the propagation of trout in the Willow Beach section of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area of Mohave County, Arizona. This mitigation measure was undertaken to contribute to the overall economic development of the area and increase the recreational opportunities in the region, Authority was provided by Public Land Order No. 1941 of August 12, 1959. In addition to the 1959 Memorandum of Understanding, a non-exhaustive search of

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service profiles and reports found documents,^{1,2} which identified the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery as a “mitigation hatchery.” Additionally, we found Congressional Bills³ which specifically identified the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery as a “mitigation hatchery.” Possibly the most interesting find was from the U.S. General Accounting Office, June 2000 report,⁴ which also specifically identified the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery in Arizona as a “mitigation hatchery.” Not all that surprisingly, there does appear to have been modifications of 2013 and later U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service information to remove the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery “mitigation” designation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Web site, reports and maps.

Regarding the cost estimates to make the trout hatchery operational, when first approached by Mohave County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported those costs to be \$2.5 million. It should be noted; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had knowledge of the damage to the one inlet pipe at least in 2010 and possibly earlier. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service actually had plans to repair the pipe in 2011. The engineering plans for the repair of the inlet system are dated 2012. In the letter referenced earlier to Senator McCain, the \$2.5 million figure grew to between \$3 and \$9 million. Contrary to Mr. Jacks’ presentation to the Board, another U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Member confirmed the project was not competitively bid on the open market and no formal solicitation was issued. Instead three proposals were obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity contracts. These proposals came in between \$1.37 and \$2.44 million, however were not evaluated due to the existing repair budget being \$400,000.

In reviewing the plans and proposals, our engineer believes the 2012 plans to not be relevant today, containing large price tag bid items such as a \$314,000 line item from one of the vendors for supplying water to the currently nonexistent trout hatchery. Additionally, it did not appear that less expensive engineering solutions were even considered. Instead, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service utilized high repair estimates and claims of low water levels starving the inlet pipe causing the trout kill as an excuse to discontinue their trout stocking program. The low water levels were actually artificially created for the purpose of allowing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to harvest bony tail chubs and/or razorback suckers from the backwaters of Lake Mohave. Coupled with the \$25 million investment by the National Park Service in 2011 to improve the recreational facilities at Willow Beach in support of sports fishing and other related recreational activities, without consideration for insuring the fishery was preserved, and in light of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service having knowledge of the damage to the Hatchery’s inlet system in 2010, this makes absolutely no sense.

Finally, why would the Federal Government discontinue an operation which has been in existence for over 52 years and is such a large and important economic driver? According to the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s 2001 Study, direct economic impacts of fishing expenditures in Mohave County total \$74.5 million annually, support 1,682 full-time and part-time jobs, and creates \$3.9 million dollars in Arizona Tax Revenue. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s own 2011 study⁵ stated, for every \$1 of rainbow trout budget expenditures, \$32.20 of retail sales and \$28 of net economic returns. The study goes on to highlight \$3.6 billion to the U.S. economy by the Fisheries Program which if it were a private company would rank No. 41 on the Fortune 500 of America’s Most Profitable Corporations.

In closing, Mohave County and our Communities respectfully request your consideration to acknowledge and direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recognize the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery as a “mitigation hatchery.” We ask that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service be funded and directed to make the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery functional for the propagation of rainbow trout to fulfill its intended purpose as a “mitigation hatchery” to contribute to the overall economic development of the area and increase the recreational opportunities in the region. We further request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service be directed to immediately purchase and begin stocking rainbow trout along the Colorado River. It is our understanding funding is currently available through \$46.528 million already approved in the Consolidated Appropriations Act Omnibus spending bill and the Energy and

¹ Such as their January 2006, report on the Economic Effects of Rainbow Trout Production by the National Fish Hatchery System.

² And the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Station Profiles of Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery.

³ Such as H.R. 4383, “To ensure the continuation of successful fish mitigation programs” in the House of Representatives May 18, 2014.

⁴ To the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Resources, House of Representatives on National Fish Hatcheries.

⁵ Net Worth, *The Economic Value of Fisheries Conservation, Fall 2011.*

Water Development Appropriations Act of 2014 which includes \$4.7 million appropriated to the Corp of Engineers to reimburse the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to operate "mitigation hatcheries."

Respectfully submitted,

HILDY ANGIUS, CHAIRMAN,
Board of Supervisors.

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM BUSTER D. JOHNSON, SUPERVISOR
DISTRICT 3, MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2001 COLLEGE DRIVE, SUITE 90,
LAKE HAVASU CITY, AZ, 86403,
FEBRUARY 25, 2014.

HONORABLE CHAIRMAN FLEMING AND MEMBERS,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs.

I am Buster Johnson, Mohave County Supervisor, District 3 and I would like to comment for the record regarding the hatcheries across the U.S. discontinuing the raising of sport fishes. The hatchery programs have brought in billions of dollars in revenue for the sport fishing industry all across the U.S.

I would like to comment on a particular hatchery in Mohave County. Since 1962, Willow Beach Hatchery has been raising rainbow trout to stock lakes and rivers in Arizona. As a matter of fact, raising rainbow trout was the reason the hatchery was built.

Based on the investment of taxpayer dollars, a vital eco-system was created all along the Colorado River by providing striper bass with a food source so that other species of fishes, including endangered species, could survive their ravenous appetite.

The investment also created a huge economic driver in that sport fishing and the supporting industries grew strong along the river. These industries created many jobs in Arizona, Nevada and California. It is estimated that this industry contributes \$74 million to the economies of those States. In my community of 50,000, there are 30 bass tournaments scheduled for this year alone. That is income that cannot be replaced without the Willow Beach Hatchery's rainbow trout program.

Willow Beach Hatchery was never intended to be a mitigation hatchery; however, they were raising bony-tail chub and razorback suckers alongside the rainbow trout. I see no reason why both programs can survive at that hatchery. Why would the USFWS invest \$1.9 million in unnecessary upgrades and not maintain the very apparatus that is needed to keep the fish (all fish) alive? The sport fishing industry not only adds to the economy of our community but it also strengthens the recovery of endangered species.

I respectfully request that the raising of rainbow trout be brought back to Willow Beach Hatchery and all necessary repairs be made in order to keep all the fish healthy.

Dr. FLEMING. I would also like to enter into the record a letter by the Senate Western Caucus to Director Ashe about the cost of environmental regulations to the hatchery system.

[A letter submitted for the record by Dr. Fleming from the Senate Western Caucus follows:]

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE SENATE WESTERN CAUCUS

Congress of the United States

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

FEBRUARY 24, 2014

The Honorable SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY,
U.S. Department of the Interior,
1849 C Street, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20240.

DEAR SECRETARY JEWELL:

We are writing to express serious concerns with the proposed direction of the National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS). In November, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a report titled “2013 Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report” that outlines the end of over 100 years of sport fish stocking operations across the Nation.

As you know, angling has been a part of the NFHS mission since its inception, and today it plays a significant role in rural and tribal economies. Around the country, the NFHS supports roughly 68,000 jobs and has an annual economic impact of \$3.6 billion. For every tax dollar invested in the NFHS, there is a return of \$28 to our national economy—largely thanks to sport fishing.

Unfortunately, the USFWS proposed to overturn this record of success by essentially eliminating sport fish stocking and instead focusing almost entirely on stocking endangered species. Over the past few months, our respective States have experienced the initial impact of this mission shift, and the results are not benefiting the NFHS or the American people.

In Arizona and Nevada, the USFWS recently announced a decision to end a 50-year trout stocking program at Willow Beach NFH within Lake Mead National Recreation Area. According to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the loss of rainbow trout and striped bass could remove \$7.7–\$11.9 million from the area’s economy.

Likewise, in New Mexico, wildlife officials were abruptly notified that Hotchkiss NFH would reduce its trout stocking by 25,000 in the Navajo Reservoir, the second most heavily fished body of water in the State. It is expected that other important sport fish populations will decline as a result of this decision. This will ruin angler satisfaction, harm economic activity, and reduce the area’s biological quality. Similarly, several tribal governments around the country have been notified that USFWS may soon downgrade its trust responsibility to deliver sports fish at certain tribal recreational lakes and rivers.

We appreciate the difficult choices Federal agencies must make given the current budget climate. However, the NFHS’s mission to help ensure sufficient fish stocks for sport fishing purposes is important to the Nation’s economy and is vital to sustaining jobs in areas throughout the country. In support of that mission, NFHS’s budget has remained steady since FY 2012 at \$46.1 million for operations and \$17.9 million for maintenance with only 10 percent allocated for non-native sport fish propagation. The drastic mission shift away from trout stocking and sport fish production to one that focuses solely on native fish production betrays the historical success of the NFHS in maintaining an important aspect of our economy.

Against this backdrop, we urge you to (1) reevaluate how you propose to realign this important mission to help ensure that the negative economic impacts of the proposed alignment are mitigated as effectively as possible; (2) explain how you intend to consult and coordinate with State and tribal wildlife agencies and affected communities to ensure that the NFHS’ sport fishing mission can be furthered by State and local partners wherever possible; (3) define specific targets that meet the angling public’s needs for recreational fishing in a way that is mindful of its economic impact to State and local economies; and (4) explain how you intend to better utilize the resources provided to you by Congress to help ensure that the NFHS’ sport fishing efforts are executed as comparably as possible to its focus on endangered species production.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Senator John McCain.

Congressman Paul A. Gosar.

Senator Dean Heller.

Congressman Joseph J. Heck.

Congressman Trent Franks.

Congressman Ben Ray Lujan.

Congressman Ann Kirkpatrick.

Dr. FLEMING. After hearing the testimony of the Fish and Wildlife Service, I am perplexed by several of the statements. While it is good to hear that the Service’s planning report is “not a decision document,” this stands in stark contrast to a memo distributed on September 25th, 2013, by the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service in which he tells his Regional Directors that there must be “hard decisions to close lower priority facilities.”

In short, the Service is preparing to abdicate its statutorily mandated responsibilities. Furthermore, that the “Service has made great progress toward full reimbursement,” but that “funding is still not sufficient to fully cover our operational costs for all of our propagation programs at current levels.”

Congress is constantly fielding requests from Federal agencies with an insatiable appetite for more funding. In this case it is not insufficient funding but the wrong priorities that is leading the Service to abandon its statutorily mandated mission. I hope the testimony from other Members and questions raised in this hearing will cause the Service to reconsider its priorities going forward.

I want to thank Members and staff for their contributions to this hearing. If there is no further business, without objection, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional Matieral Submitted for the Record]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE PAUL A. GOSAR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to recognize the important economic benefits of Federal Fish Hatcheries for communities throughout the Nation. By the Fish and Wildlife Service’s own estimates, the National Fish Hatchery System returns \$28 to the economy for every dollar spent. That’s an excellent return on our investment and while the USFWS is looking at closing hatcheries throughout the Nation, there is plenty of taxpayer dollars being wasted elsewhere in our Federal budget that we can reprioritize to fund these important economic engines. The fact that the Fish and Wildlife Service does not recognize and consider these economic impact is short-sighted and misguided.

Furthermore, I am deeply troubled by the Fish and Wildlife Service’s decision to discontinue the Rainbow Trout Stocking Program at Willow Beach.

For over 50 years, the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery has successfully raised and planted Rainbow Trout in the lower Colorado River.

The arbitrary decision to discontinue this important program will have significant consequences for local communities along the river as well as sportsmen and anglers throughout the Nation.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has estimated that \$7.5–\$12 million flow into the Willow Beach region annually as a result of the economic activity associated with rainbow trout and striped bass anglers. A report done by Arizona State University found that more than a quarter million fisherman visit Arizona each year and spend more than \$800 million on sporting goods and other tourism expenses.

Terminating the annual production of 150,000 rainbow trout at that the Willow Beach Hatchery will stifle Arizona’s multi-million dollar fishing industry as well as cause considerable harm to small businesses, local governments and our citizens who depend on the financial benefits associated with sports fishing.

The Willow Beach Hatchery will not be closing with the termination of the trout stocking program, even though the sole reason the hatchery was created in the first place was to produce rainbow trout for the sport fishing community.

Rather than raising and planting rainbow trout that drive tourism and yield economic growth, the Fish and Wildlife service has instructed the hatchery to focus on producing suckers and other fish that don’t attract anglers or benefit our economy.

I commend Chairman Fleming for recognizing the danger of this short-sighted decision and continuing to spread awareness through this important hearing.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Question. What were the original reasons that the National Fish Hatchery System was established in 1871?

Answer. The United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries (more commonly known as the U.S. Fish Commission) was authorized by a joint Congressional resolution on February 9, 1871. President Ulysses S Grant then established the U.S.

Fish Commission and appointed Spencer Fullerton Baird as the first Commissioner. The U.S. Fish Commission was established to investigate the causes of declines in stocks of commercial fish in U.S. coastal and inland waters, to provide recommendations to Congress and the States for reversing these declines, and to oversee implementation of restoration actions. This includes the propagation efforts of the National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS). Numerous laws enacted over the years have directed the Service to use the NFHS to carry out actions such as providing food fish, farm pond stocking, mitigation, and restoration and recovery of imperiled species.

Question. Isn't it true that one of the fundamental goals of the hatchery system was to compensate or mitigate for the loss of fish and recreational opportunities because of Federal water projects?

Answer. One of the fundamental responsibilities of the NFHS over the years has been to seek and provide for mitigation of fishery resources that were impaired due to Federal water-related development. Mitigation for Federal water projects is still an important goal of the NFHS, but not at the expense of higher priorities such as the restoration or recovery of threatened and endangered species, or fulfilling tribal trust responsibilities. With full reimbursement, the NFHS will continue its mitigation programs.

Question. Since the vast majority of the Federal water projects are still in place, how has the statutory responsibility for this mitigation been removed?

Answer. Over the past 40 years, our many partners, Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Department of the Interior (DOI), have directed the Service to secure mitigation reimbursement from the entities responsible for the respective water development project. Over the past decade, Congress, OMB, DOI, and our partners have asked the Service to intensify our efforts to obtain reimbursement for fish mitigation production from these agencies. The Service is making every effort to comply with that direction and to shift the funding for this mitigation work to the responsible party. We understand that the fish supplied by our hatcheries provide important economic opportunities to the States and the recreational community in general, and we support the continuation of mitigation work on a reimbursable basis.

Question. When did the primary focus of the hatchery system change from stocking and mitigation of Federal water projects to the recovery and restoration of federally listed species?

Answer. Since the inception of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, there has been an increasing need to attempt to prevent the loss of native species through captive rearing and subsequent stocking, as identified in approved recovery and restoration plans.

Although Congress provided the Service with \$46,528,000 to operate the NFHS in the recently enacted FY 2014 Omnibus, a significant increase compared to FY 2013, funding is still not sufficient to continue all existing propagation programs at current levels. The Service is using the *National Fish Hatchery System Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report* (Report) to engage stakeholders (Congress, State fish and wildlife agencies, tribes, and other partners) to discuss the Report and its findings, as well as our budget challenges. We're seeking input on how we should operate the NFHS more efficiently and within available resources into the future. Working together, we would like to chart a course forward for the NFHS that is financially sustainable, addresses today's most pressing conservation challenges, and, in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders, continues to serve the public interest.

Question. Of the 140 million fish that are propagated by the hatchery system each year, how many are used for the recovery and restoration of a federally listed species?

Answer. In 2013, nearly 80 million eggs were transferred to Federal, State, and tribal hatcheries by the NFHS, and approximately 128 million fish were released into the wild. Of those fish released, 13.3 million were classified as threatened or endangered.

Question. At the Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery in Maine, how many Atlantic salmon, which is a listed species, are propagated and released each year? What is the cost of this program?

Answer. Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is entirely focused on recovery and preventing extinction of Atlantic salmon. As part of the recovery program for the Penobscot River, Craig Brook NFH receives sea-run adult Atlantic salmon trapped from the Penobscot River for use as broodstock. These adults are spawned in the fall of every year and produce approximately 3 million eggs. Eggs are then transferred to Green Lake National Fish Hatchery for Penobscot River smolt production. The rest of the eggs are raised at Craig Brook NFH and released as fry.

In addition, Craig Brook NFH supports the recovery of six Atlantic salmon populations within the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment (DPS) that were listed as an endangered species in 2000. Juvenile Atlantic salmon are captured from the Dennys, East Machias, Machias, Narraguagus, Pleasant, and Sheepscot rivers annually and brought to Craig Brook NFH for captive rearing. These juveniles are reared at Craig Brook NFH to sexual maturity and spawned to produce fry that are stocked back into the same river where the parents were captured.

An important component of both programs at Craig Brook NFH is the genetic screening of broodstock. All broodstock, both Penobscot sea-run adults and DPS juveniles, are genetically characterized through DNA analysis to ensure that no undesirable genes are inadvertently introduced into the broodstock population.

Total cost for the Craig Brook NFH program is \$958,607, which includes operations and salaries for Craig Brook NFH and the genetic and fish health costs associated with running the program. That does not include cost for smolt production at Green Lake NFH.

Question. How many of these fish are counted toward the recovery goals of this species? How many survive to adulthood after their release?

Answer. Attached is a summary of all adult returns from 1970 until 2013 and it includes a breakdown of natural reared and hatchery origin fish.

The recovery goals are still being developed and a revised Atlantic salmon recovery plan is expected to be released soon for the entire DPS.

Question. During the past 5 years, why has the Obama Administration requested less money for the operation and maintenance of the hatchery system?

Answer. At the direction of Congress and several Administrations, the Service has asked that responsible Federal agencies fund their share of the expenses of mitigation hatcheries. The Service has been successful in engaging these agencies. In the face of declining budgets, the Service reduced the amount requested for hatcheries, relying on the reimbursements as offsets. For FY 2015, the Administration has requested \$48,617,000 for National Fish Hatchery Operations, approximately \$2 million more than Congress appropriated in FY 2014.

Question. Since the Congress has appropriated more money than the Obama Administration requested for the operation, maintenance and equipment of the hatchery system over the past 5 years, why is it not fair to conclude that the Congress places a higher priority on the system, than the Fish and Wildlife Service?

Answer. The Service appreciates the support for the National Fish Hatchery System provided by Congress. In requesting funding to operate the National Fish Hatchery System, the Service is complying with Congressional direction to seek reimbursement for fish production operations to mitigate for the impacts associated with Federal water development projects. Over the past several years, the Service has successfully negotiated reimbursement or developed agreements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and others, to help cover the costs associated with mitigation fish production. The Service has also conducted a review of our 70 propagation hatcheries and is using that report as a basis for discussions with stakeholders on how best to operate the system in a more sustainable manner while supporting the highest priority fish and aquatic conservation programs. Implementation of the report will be phased and carried out in consultation with Congress, States, tribes, and other partners.

Question. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service's Workforce Planning Report, there are 291 propagation programs within the hatchery system. Of these, 171 are for ESA recovery and restoration efforts, 56 are for tribal interests, and 70 are for native and non-native fish mitigation. By my count, the last category represents less than 25 percent of the programs and less than 10 percent of the money being spent. Are my figures correct?

Answer. When the team was evaluating each and every propagation program individually, they classified propagation programs that covered more than one category into the highest priority category. For example, if a propagation program is both restoration and mitigation, it is classified as restoration. Based on our counts, there are 30 propagation programs that are classified as native and non-native mitigation. Fewer than 25 percent of the propagation programs fall into the native and non-native species categories, and approximately 10 percent of the FY 2012 hatchery operations and annual maintenance funding supported native and non-native species programs.

Question. Why would a 5 percent increase in funding for the operation and maintenance of the hatchery system result in the termination of programs and personnel in your Southeast Region?

Answer. The *National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report* (Report) is not a decision document. It offers management options and recommendations under different funding scenarios. As stated in the Report

under the 5 percent increase scenario, “The Review Team chose to allocate the additional funding to the regions based on existing allocation formulas, such that each region with propagation facilities received a portion of the funding.” The Southeast Region was already struggling with a \$2.1 million shortfall in FY 2012 when the Report was developed. If a 5 percent increase was distributed based on existing allocation formulas, the Southeast Region would still be facing a deficit under that scenario in FY 2012.

Question. What is the average per unit cost to operate a national fish hatchery?

Answer. As shown in Appendix B of the Report, hatcheries vary greatly in size, staffing levels and complexity. The average cost by category is as follows:

- \$3,561,303 for a large multi-station complex
- \$906,271 for a complex of at least 2 facilities
- \$848,500 for a large stand alone hatchery
- \$532,182 for a small stand alone hatchery

The report can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2013/pdf/NFHSReviewCoverPageandReport.pdf>.

The appendices can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2013/pdf/NFHSReportAppendices.pdf>.

Question. What is the current operations backlog within the National Fish Hatchery System?

Answer. To answer this question, the Service queried unfunded projects that were entered into our Fisheries Operational Needs database between 2008 and 2012. On this basis alone, we identified 135 outstanding projects totaling \$14.5 million at our National Fish Hatcheries, Fish Technology Centers and Fish Health Centers.

Question. What is the current maintenance backlog within the National Fish Hatchery System?

Answer. Our deferred maintenance backlog numbers are calculated at the end of every fiscal year (FY). At the end of FY 2013, the National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) had 4,602 assets valued at \$2,328,078,720. The Deferred Maintenance backlog for the NFHS totaled \$167,364,849.

Question. In the mid-1990s, the Clinton Administration decided it wanted to get out of the hatchery business and the Fish and Wildlife Service supported legislative efforts to transfer, at no cost, a number of Federal fish hatcheries to various States and local governmental entities. Would the Service support the transfer of some, or all, of the so-called mitigation hatcheries to the various states?

Answer. The Service has not entered into discussions regarding hatchery transfers. However, if a State were to contact us, we may be willing to discuss a transfer depending on the hatchery.

Question. How much of the work being performed within the Federal fish hatchery system is the result of unpaid volunteers? How many hours are being volunteered, how many individuals volunteer their time in 2013 and what is the financial value of their efforts?

Answer. Whether they want to give back to communities, want to be good stewards of the land, set examples for future generations, or want to share their wealth of knowledge, volunteers are critical to the operation of national fish hatcheries across the country. In FY 2013, National Fish Hatchery System facilities recorded 98,265 hours by adult volunteers valued at \$2,215,876. The National Fish Hatchery System also recorded 12,618 hours by youth volunteers.

Question. When will the Service make a decision on the future of its National Broodstock Program? What is the annual cost of keeping this program?

Answer. The Service has deferred a decision on the National Broodstock Program until we can conduct a similar analysis of all egg requests made of our broodstock facilities. We have not established a timeframe for our decision. The total amount of Service funding that was spent at Ennis, Erwin, and White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatcheries specifically for the National Broodstock Program in FY 2012 was \$928,577. Reimbursement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in FY 2012 for the three hatcheries totaled \$548,841. These costs do not include associated fish health costs.

Question. Is it fair to say that the Service does not intend to terminate the broodstock programs at the Ennis, Erwin and White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatcheries which are producing millions of rainbow trout fish eggs which the Service indicates can no longer be obtained from the wild? What is the cost of these three programs? What is the value of this work?

Answer. The Service does not intend to terminate broodstock programs at Ennis, Erwin and White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatcheries in the near-term. We have deferred a decision on the National Broodstock Program until we can conduct a similar analysis of all egg requests made of our broodstock facilities. The total

amount of Service funding that was spent at the three hatcheries specifically for the National Broodstock Program in FY 2012 was \$928,577. Reimbursement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in FY 2012 for the three hatcheries totaled \$548,841. These costs do not include associated fish health costs.

Question. Why did the Fish and Wildlife Service terminate the rainbow trout production program at the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery in Arizona? Hasn't this hatchery been propagating and releasing these fish for over 50 years?

Answer. The Service terminated trout production at Willow Beach NFH in fall 2013 due to a failure in the water supply line. The river intake system for trout production at Willow Beach NFH is a dual pipeline combination, and has been compromised by structural and biofouling issues. Half of its flow capacity was eliminated when one pipeline collapsed. The intake to the remaining half was clogged with vegetation this past summer to the point where flows were stopped, resulting in loss of trout. The intake was dewatered this fall as water levels were drawn down in Lake Mohave, causing mortalities in half the hatchery raceways. Each failure of the intake resulted in the loss of the fish that were dependent upon the water flowing to the raceways, culminating in the last incident that killed thousands of trout. The remaining trout were only saved because hatchery staff worked well into the night to immediately release them to the river.

Question. Why weren't locally elected officials informed prior to the termination of this program?

Answer. This was not a planned termination. Local officials were not informed in advance because it was an emergency and hatchery staff had to respond in an urgent manner to save as many fish as possible.

Since the collapse of the deeper water supply line, Willow Beach NFH has had to rely on the shallower water line to maintain trout production. Fish were lost in the summer of 2013 when the remaining water line became clogged with vegetation. When the Lake Mohave water levels were drawn down last fall, there was no water available to keep the fish alive. Hatchery staff saved as many fish as they could by releasing them into the river.

Question. It is my understanding that the Service has told the affected communities that they stopped rainbow trout production because of a broken hatchery pipe. What is the cost to replace this pipe and how long would it take to get this production back on line?

Answer. The Service requested contractor bids in 2012 for repair of the existing pipeline. Even without a system to remove quagga mussels from the river water, contractor bids ranged from \$1.37 to \$2.43 million to repair the existing pipeline.

The Service developed an engineering estimate in 2011 to construct a system to deliver clean water from the river in sufficient quantities to rear both the endangered species and the trout. That estimate totaled \$8.46 million, with a significant increase in operational costs to then maintain the new delivery and treatment systems.

The Service lacks sufficient funding in both our Construction and Hatchery Deferred Maintenance accounts to repair or replace the existing pipeline or to construct a new system.

Question. How many other stocking programs throughout the United States have been terminated in the last 12 months? Please provide a complete list of those propagation programs and the reasons they are no longer producing fish.

Answer. In Region 3, the Service discontinued two propagation programs at Neosho NFH (MO): (1) rainbow trout that were surplus to our mitigation needs; and (2) rearing of walleye fry obtained from the Missouri Department of Conservation, an in-kind exchange program that last produced fish in 2008

In Region 4, the Service discontinued several lower priority propagation programs at the following hatcheries: cobia at Bears Bluff NFH (SC); largemouth bass and bluegill at Edenton NFH (NC); smallmouth bass and walleye at Mammoth Spring NFH (AR); largemouth bass at Natchitoches NFH (LA); largemouth bass and bluegill at Orangeburg NFH (SC); and largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and channel catfish at Private John Allen NFH (MS).

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

444 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NW., SUITE 725,
WASHINGTON, DC, 20001,
MARCH 20, 2014.

THE HONORABLE DR. JOHN FLEMING, CHAIRMAN,
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs,
Committee on Natural Resources,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515.

THE HONORABLE GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, RANKING MEMBER,
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs,
Committee on Natural Resources,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC 20515.

Re: USFWS Fish Hatchery System Report and Direction

Dear Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Sablan:

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) is writing to alert you to a significant direction change in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Fish Hatchery Program and its associated programs that will have adverse effects on State fisheries programs and regional economies.

Based on recent conversations and direct interactions with USFWS personnel, it appears that USFWS is intending to abandon fisheries programs that would benefit sport fishing including the production of key hatchery fish and the oversight of new aquaculture drugs that the USFWS, tribes, and States all depend upon in their hatcheries to ensure the efficient production of essential fish. We are particularly concerned as these decisions were made in absence of input from USFWS' long standing State partners, many whom have been close partners in fish production since 1870 when the U.S. Fish Commission, the progenitor organization of the USFWS, was first established.

With respect to the USFWS Fish Hatchery Program, the USFWS in 2013 developed a strategic hatchery and workforce planning report. The report laid out a new desired direction without any direct input from the any State partners who all have vested interests in the management and production of fish from the National Fish Hatchery System. The report expressly indicates that the USFWS will move away from producing fish that benefit of all of our Nation's sport fisheries and will focus on only producing fish that are federally listed, or Federal trust species and imperiled aquatic species. This shift completely disregards the recent 2011 USFWS study that documents the annual economic benefit of approximately \$3.6 billion to the Nation's economic activity from Federal fish hatcheries, a cost-benefit ratio of 1:26 which is unlikely rivaled in any Federal program. It is AFWA's opinion that the new USFWS Hatchery Report and its associated budget priorities and implications do not reflect needs of the Nation's aquatic resources or economy and will greatly harm our Nation's fisheries.

Another area of deep concern to our member States is a significant shift in how USFWS mitigation hatcheries are operated. These Federal hatcheries were built to offset losses to public trust resources owned by States from Federal water and other infrastructure projects and are vital to replacing lost fisheries values. It appears to our members that the USFWS has little interest in continuing to meet the Federal obligations for mitigation unless they are completely compensated for the costs of operation and maintenance by the Federal agency responsible for these damages to State property. While our members have always been supportive of USFWS seeking due compensation from Federal project owners and operators, it does not make a difference to our members who in the Federal Government pays for these facilities as long as the mitigation for our lost fisheries resources is fully compensated.

Additionally, it has been communicated to AFWA that the USFWS Directorate wants to use only "native" fish species in any type of mitigation hatchery work. This position completely ignores that most of the "non-native" fish produced in Federal and State hatcheries are essential to the management of our Nation's fisheries and are now naturalized species in the United States. It also assumes that our Nation's fish habitat can support all native species which is frequently incorrect as much of the Nation's aquatic habitats have been altered beyond the capacity of some native species to survive in them. Further, the States already have active long-term native fish management programs in place that have been developed in partnership with the USFWS. If the USFWS switches their aquaculture operations to focus primarily

on Federal trust and imperiled species and then only native fish, it will add an unnecessary level of redundancy, require additional infrastructure improvements, cost billions in economic activity, and waste Federal funds.

The USFWS also proposes reducing funding for the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership (AADAP), an associated Federal fish hatchery program and converting it to a completely user-pay system. The program is responsible for gaining U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approval of aquaculture drugs to meet increasing fish health needs. This small, although highly essential, program once had an annual budget of \$1.2 million dollars but is now funded at \$800,000 with a loss of three full time employees. The drugs that are researched through this program are essential for the production of our Nation's sports fish as well as imperiled native species and have saved State and Federal hatcheries approximately 10–30 percent of their yearly production costs, approximately \$50 to \$150 million annually. This unique partnership, administered by the USFWS AADAP staff, has State and tribal hatcheries pay an annual fee to use investigational new animal drugs (INAD) under USFDA permit, and then in turn provide essential data that allows the USFDA to ultimately register these drugs for use. By moving this program to strictly user-pay for the national INAD portion of the program, the program costs likely will exceed the State and outside funding sources available for the staffing and associated research required by USFDA, resulting in elimination of this amazing program. The USFDA has indicated if financial resources to support the INAD portion of the program are insufficient, they may shutter the program. The loss of this program will cost our members significantly and reduce the ability of our Nation's hatcheries to support the approximately \$30 billion annually that Federal, State and tribal hatcheries contribute to our national economy.

Given the importance of the USFWS Hatchery System's production of sports fish and national oversight of the AADAP program and the potential conversion of these assets to other programs, AFWA is requesting the assistance of the Chair and Ranking Member of the Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee to: (1) Request the USFWS Directorate to put any of the proposed policy changes to the USFWS Hatchery and AADAP Programs in abeyance and immediately begin discussions and consultations with our membership on the future direction of these programs; (2) require the USFWS Directorate to meet all of their current Federal obligations for mitigation, regardless of whether they are successful in receiving funds from Federal project owners, with no concurrent reduction to other fish production; (3) stop any potential policy change to require USFWS hatcheries to produce only "native" fish; and (4) request your support and assistance with the appropriators to ensure, at a minimum, the base funding of \$800,000 continues for AADAP. We welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how USFWS mitigation responsibilities are met while not putting the sport fishing recreational economy at risk by underfunding fish hatchery production in favor of shifting USFWS priorities to Federal trust and imperiled species.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter which has huge implications for our Nation's fisheries and the economies that depend on them.

Sincerely,

DAN FORSTER,
President.

COLORADO STATE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION FROM THE 2014 SESSION, SUBMITTED
FOR THE RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

**Second Regular Session
Sixty-ninth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

BILLPAPER

LLS NO. R14–0913.01 Kurt Woock x4349

SENATE Joint Resolution

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Schwartz,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**Hamner,**

Senate Committees**House Committees**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION**Concerning national fish hatcheries in Colorado.**

WHEREAS, Sport fishing routinely draws more than 725,000 participants in Colorado annually, constituting an important component of Colorado's economy, with angler expenditures exceeding \$645 million in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Colorado Parks and Wildlife received more than \$13 million of revenue from the sale of fishing licenses in fiscal year 2012–13, a significant portion of the agency's budget; and

WHEREAS, Trout produced in both state and federal hatchery systems and stocked into waters throughout Colorado are important in maintaining sport fishing and its economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, The continued operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery is essential for the Bureau of Reclamation to fulfill its ongoing obligation to mitigate the negative impacts on fish, wildlife, and recreation created when federal reservoir storage facilities were constructed; and

WHEREAS, The greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado's state fish, was listed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered in 1973 and downlisted as a threatened species in 1977 due to the successful conservation efforts by state and federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, following a 5-year review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the greenback cutthroat trout remains a threatened species due to new threats to the species, including: The effects of fire and chemical retardants used in firefighting; increased human population growth within the range of the subspecies; the introduction of nonnative species; the fragmentation and genetic isolation of small populations; and the effects of global climate change; and

WHEREAS, Based on current scientific evidence, only one natural greenback cutthroat trout population exists in Colorado, and greenback cutthroat trout management relies on efforts by the state and the Leadville National Fish Hatchery; and

WHEREAS, The Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery produces trout to fill needs for federal water development projects throughout western Colorado and northern New Mexico and plays an important role in fulfilling the mitigation responsibility from the construction of federal reservoir storage facilities such as Blue Mesa Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, The Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery stocks rivers and reservoirs throughout Colorado's Western Slope with more than 342,000 fish per year, yielding 171,000 angler recreation days; and

WHEREAS, The Leadville National Fish Hatchery, established in 1889, has stocked waters in Colorado, including military establishments on the Front Range, and in 2011 such stocking created an estimated economic benefit of \$3.5 million from recreational fishing; and

WHEREAS, The Leadville National Fish Hatchery has been successful in rearing and propagating cold-water fish, including the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, and serves a key role in returning this fish to its home waters; and

WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Survey recently completed a study predicting that the closure of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery, coupled with funding cuts to the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery, will curtail the stocking of Colorado's waters, entailing a loss of associated economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, The continuation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery's role as a trout production and recovery facility and the extension of current funding levels

for the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery are extremely important to Colorado's economy, sport fishing, and the greenback cutthroat trout's recovery; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-ninth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

(1) That the General Assembly supports the continued operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, to maintain its current mission of stocking Colorado waters for recreational fishing and the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

(2) That the General Assembly supports the operation of the hatchery and adjacent federal lands in a manner that promotes public recreation and scientific research and educational activities.

(3) That the General Assembly urges the Bureau of Reclamation to honor its obligation to mitigate the impacts resulting from federal water projects.

(4) That the General Assembly urges the Department of Natural Resources and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to all members of the Colorado delegation to the United States Congress, the Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Governor John Hickenlooper.

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.

Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.

Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

COLORADO STATE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION FROM THE 2014 SESSION, SUBMITTED
FOR THE RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

STATE OF COLORADO

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 14-017

BY SENATOR(S) Schwartz, Aguilar, Brophy, Crowder, Guzman, Harvey, Heath, Herpin, Hodge, Jahn, Jones, Kefalas, King, Newell, Nicholson, Roberts, Scheffel, Tochtrop, Todd, Ulibarri, Zenzinger, Carroll;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hamner, Becker, Buckner, Conti, DelGrosso, Dore, Duran, Exum, Fields, Garcia, Gardner, Gerou, Ginal, Holbert, Hullinghorst, Humphrey, Kraft-Tharp, Labuda, Landgraf, Lawrence, Lebsock, May, McCann, McLachlan, Melton, Mitsch Bush, Moreno, Murray, Navarro, Nordberg, Pettersen, Primavera, Priola, Rankin, Rosenthal, Ryden, Salazar, Schafer, Singer, Sonnenberg, Stephens, Tyler, Vigil, Waller, Williams, Wilson, Young, Ferrandino.

CONCERNING NATIONAL FISH HATCHERIES IN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, Sport fishing routinely draws more than 725,000 participants in Colorado annually, constituting an important component of Colorado's economy, with angler expenditures exceeding \$645 million in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Colorado Parks and Wildlife received more than \$13 million of revenue from the sale of fishing licenses in fiscal year 2012-13, a significant portion of the agency's budget; and

WHEREAS, Trout produced in both state and federal hatchery systems and stocked into waters throughout Colorado are important in maintaining sport fishing and its economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, The continued operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery is essential for the Bureau of Reclamation to fulfill its ongoing obligation to mitigate the negative impacts on fish, wildlife, and recreation created when federal reservoir storage facilities were constructed; and

WHEREAS, The greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado's state fish, was listed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered in 1973 and downlisted as a threatened species in 1977 due to the successful conservation efforts by state and federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, following a 5-year review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the greenback cutthroat trout remains a threatened species due to new threats to the species, including: The effects of fire and chemical retardants used in firefighting; increased human population growth within the range of the subspecies; the introduction of nonnative species; the fragmentation and genetic isolation of small populations; and the effects of global climate change; and

WHEREAS, Based on current scientific evidence, only one natural greenback cutthroat trout population exists in Colorado, and greenback cutthroat trout management relies on efforts by the state and the Leadville National Fish Hatchery; and

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WHEREAS, The Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery stocks rivers and reservoirs throughout Colorado's Western Slope with more than 342,000 fish per year, yielding 171,000 angler recreation days; and

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WHEREAS, The Leadville National Fish Hatchery has been successful in rearing and propagating cold-water fish, including the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, and serves a key role in returning this fish to its home waters; and

WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Survey recently completed a study predicting that the closure of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery, coupled with funding cuts to the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery, will curtail the stocking of Colorado's waters, entailing a loss of associated economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, The continuation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery's role as a trout production and recovery facility and the extension of current funding levels for the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery are extremely important to Colorado's economy, sport fishing, and the greenback cutthroat trout's recovery; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-ninth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

(1) That the General Assembly supports the continued operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, to maintain its current mission of stocking Colorado waters for recreational fishing and the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

(2) That the General Assembly supports the operation of the hatchery and adjacent federal lands in a manner that promotes public recreation and scientific research and educational activities.

(3) That the General Assembly urges the Bureau of Reclamation to honor its obligation to mitigate the impacts resulting from federal water projects.

(4) That the General Assembly urges the Department of Natural Resources and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the operation of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery and the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to all members of the Colorado delegation to the United States Congress, the Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Governor John Hickenlooper.

Morgan Carroll
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Mark Ferrandino
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Cindi Markwell
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE FRIENDS OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE
FOREST NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

4730 ROCK CREEK ROAD,
SUCHES, GA 30572,
DECEMBER 17, 2013.

Honorable SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY,
Department of the Interior,
Main Interior Building,
1849 C Street, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20240.

DEAR SECRETARY JEWELL:

The Friends of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to support the mission of the Chattahoochee Forest NFH, promote conservation ethics, education, and encourage the sport of trout fishing. We have over 100 members as well as a number of Trout Unlimited chapters.

I am writing you to express the concern of our Friends Group regarding the recent release of a report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service entitled "National Fish Hatchery System—Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report." The report realigns the priorities of the National Fish Hatchery System with its lowest priority being trout mitigation hatcheries (recreational fishing) and its highest being the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The Service plans to implement the recommendations of the report in FY 2015 and one option is to close the Chattahoochee Forest NFH, even though the hatchery receives reimbursement funding for 70 percent of its operational budget from the Corps of Engineers. The Chattahoochee hatchery stocks over 1 million fish annually in waters throughout Georgia and the Southeast. The hatchery provides an enormous economic impact to local, regional and State economies. In a recent economic study (Caudill and Charbonneau, updated 2013), the total economic output from the hatchery came to \$30.3 million annually, a return of more than \$40.00 for every dollar spent to operate the hatchery. Retail sales associated with angler expenditures as a result of stocking trout by the Chattahoochee hatchery amounted to \$16 million annually.

In reviewing the report, I have a number of concerns:

- The Service Directorate who set the priorities in the report is made up of employees whose background and experience is predominately Ecological Service and Endangered Species. A quick review of these folks shows that 95 percent of the Directorate came from the Ecological Service program.
- The report is very biased against mitigation trout hatcheries. The end product of the report was identified before the report was fully developed.
- No one with any project leader field experience was part of the group that developed the report. No one with a Fisheries background was part of the team that developed the report.
- Our State partners and groups such as the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council have been excluded from having any input into the report. A recent report by the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council recommends that trout mitigation is a Service responsibility.
- The Director of the Service has totally ignored Congress and the House and Senate language that has been very positive of the Service's trout mitigation program.
- The Director has shown little respect for the Service's Fisheries Program and its employees by his actions and wordage.

I encourage you to get involved in questioning the actions and the direction that Director Ashe is taking. The Service has become an agency that does not want to communicate with its State Partners, has little respect for anyone in the Fisheries Program, does not care what Congress says, and is ignoring those folks in this country that value recreational fishing and hunting.

Please feel free to contact me regarding my concerns.

Sincerely,

ROGER SCHULZ,
President.

LETTER SENT TO SECRETARY JEWELL FROM THE TENNESSEE/ARIZONA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 11, 2013.

The Honorable SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY,
U.S. Department of the Interior,
1849 C St. N.W.,
Washington, DC 20240.

DEAR SECRETARY JEWELL:

We write today with grave concerns over the future of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mitigation hatchery program. As you know, the mitigation hatcheries are vital to the economic health of communities impacted by the construction of power-generating and flood control water development projects. Mitigation hatcheries replace fisheries destroyed by the construction of these Federal water development projects, and guarantee that the vital economic benefits from world-class fisheries will not be lost or interrupted. The vital economic benefits gained from fisheries, both prior to construction of water development projects and after mitigation, mean thousands of critically-needed jobs and tens of millions of dollars of irreplaceable economic activity in rural communities.

It has come to our attention that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recently completed an internal propagation hatchery review study that examined allocations for the hatchery program based on several budget scenarios. News of the existence of this study, and the insufficient communication from the Service regarding its intent and goals, have caused a great deal of concern in communities near mitigation hatcheries and along the rivers and streams served by mitigation hatcheries. It is our understanding that this study is soon to be released, along with decisions about hatchery closures. We are gravely concerned that Congress has not been consulted on the matter.

Given that any cuts or consolidation within the mitigation hatchery program pose the very real potential for significant negative economic impact in our communities, we are formally requesting that the Service grant at least a 60-day review period between the public release of the study, or any reorganization plan arising from it, and the initiation of any action, or preparation for action, arising from or recommended by the study or related reorganization plan. We believe it is critical that all Federal, State, local, and private stakeholders be granted this time to both fully evaluate the study and its findings, and to adequately prepare for recommendations that may threaten our local economies.

We look forward to reviewing such a plan, discussing its findings and recommendations with our constituents, and providing the Service with valuable feedback. In the unfortunate circumstance you are unwilling to grant this requested 60-

day public review period, please immediately contact our offices. We hope to have your response by 5 p.m., Thursday, September 12th.

Sincerely,

Lamar Alexander, U.S. Senator.

John Boozman, U.S. Senator.

Doug Collins, Member of Congress.

Tim Griffin, Member of Congress.

Steve Womack, Member of Congress.

Mark L. Pryor, U.S. Senator.

Rick Crawford, Member of Congress.

Tom Cotton, Member of Congress.

Phil Roe, MD, Member of Congress.

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

NOVEMBER 22, 2013

The Honorable SALLY JEWELL, SECRETARY,
Department of the Interior,
Main Interior Building,
1849 C Street, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20240.

Dear Secretary Jewell,

I am writing on behalf of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies regarding our concerns over the future of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) fisheries program in general and the National Fish Hatchery System, particularly the mitigation hatchery program. Director Dan Ashe sent a letter in October 2012, informing conservation partners that the Service planned to assess its National Fish Hatchery System workforce, organizational structure and assets to ensure that the Service was positioned to address current and future aquatic resource needs. Director Ashe further identifies in this letter the importance of coordinating with stakeholders and partners, stating that "coordination with stakeholders and partners is essential to achieving our mutual and individual conservation goals". The report, titled *National Fish Hatchery System, Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report, March 2013*, was released by the Service on November 15. The National Fish Hatchery System assessment was precipitated by a broader assessment by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council) in 2010 of the Service's Fisheries Program. While the Council and State resource partners were actively and openly engaged with the Service in developing the recently released *Strategic Vision/or Fish and Aquatic Resource Conservation in the Fish and Wildlife Service: A Partnership Perspective (Vision)*, both the Council and State resource partners have been noticeably excluded from Service discussions and evaluations of the National Fish Hatchery System, and particularly the mitigation hatchery program.

The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies consists of Directors of fish and wildlife resource management agencies from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Our member States and territories have a long history of effective collaborative partnering with the Fish and Wildlife Service to recover and maintain sport fish populations. Recovery projects include gulf coast strain striped bass, mitigation trout stocking, alligator gar, lake sturgeon and redbreast sunfish. These efforts have resulted in positive improvements in fish populations across the southeast region and would not have been possible without the active participation of the Service and their National Fish Hatchery System.

Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies member States and territories are concerned that the Service, through their internal comprehensive workforce analysis are preparing to move forward with substantial changes to their National Fish Hatchery System without consideration or input from partner States that will be affected by operational decisions. We certainly understand and appreciate the difficulties of maintaining programs during stagnate budgets and changing priorities. However, the Service has worked for many years to foster collaboration with the States and the States now have many programs dependent on the National Fish Hatchery System. We ask that the Service work collaboratively with the States to seek solutions to the National Fish Hatchery System budgetary and operational issues before any final decisions are made to adjust fish production or close facilities.

The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Directors at their October 15, 2013 annual business meeting in Oklahoma City, OK, unanimously adopted the attached resolution encouraging the Service to engage the States in an appropriate manner that reflects our longstanding, cooperative partnership prior to making final policy and budgetary decisions on key activities, especially those related to the National Fish Hatchery Comprehensive Workforce Analysis and Implementation Planning and mitigation hatchery operations. Our hope is that we can work together with our Service partners and the Service Directorate to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet historical Federal funding obligations relative to mitigation hatcheries.

Thank you for taking time to hear and consider our concerns. The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Directors look forward to working with you and the Service Directorate to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

ED CARTER,
President, Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

RESOLUTION

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FISHERIES OBLIGATIONS, FUNDING AND PLANNING

WHEREAS, sport fishing is a 115 billion dollar economic driver and provides 828,000 jobs in this country: and

WHEREAS, sport fishing is a critical gateway for public support of conservation; and

WHEREAS, the southeastern states and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) have a history of a cooperative partnership that has integrated federal and state hatchery operations for the betterment of sport fish recreation and native species conservation; and

WHEREAS, supplemental fish stocking is essential to maintaining our Nation's sport fishing capacity and native species conservation efforts; and

WHEREAS, the public has benefitted from cooperative efforts between the states and the Service through the development and sharing of brood stocks, egg sources, fish health support, drug approval, and fisheries conservation research programs: and

WHEREAS, the Service and states have a history of effective partnership in meeting the public's expectations for the use and enjoyment of aquatic resources: and

WHEREAS, the use of cultured fish is an important practice for maintaining and enhancing angler recruitment and retention, and fisheries have been established and enhanced primarily using fish stocked from recreational fish egg sources developed and maintained jointly through state and Service efforts; and

WHEREAS, in these times of diminished budgets the states are concerned about the Service Directorate redirecting funds away from programs that support fisheries management activities with proven successful track records and public benefit; and

WHEREAS, the states cannot afford nor should they be expected to take on the statutory responsibilities of the federal government, especially related to mitigation for water development projects, and are further concerned with the closed process being used by the Service Directorate to conduct their comprehensive hatchery and workforce analysis: and

WHEREAS, fisheries program priority decisions that impact state trust species are being made by the Service Directorate without consultation with the states.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly encourages the Service to engage the states in an appropriate manner that reflects our long-standing, cooperative partnership prior to making final policy and budgetary decisions specifically related to the following fisheries activities;

- a. National Fish Hatchery Comprehensive Workforce Analysis and Implementation Planning;
- b. Aquatic Drug Approval Program Budget Cuts;
- c. Guidance for fish stocking, angler access, and fisheries management on National Fish and Wildlife Refuges; and
- d. Implementing the USFWS Fish and Aquatic Resources Strategic Vision and Needs Assessment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Service Directorate and the states work in a coordinated and strategic fashion with federal appropriators to meet historical federal funding obligations relative to mitigation hatcheries.

ADOPTED by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in official session at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on October 15, 2013.

SR 16—ARIZONA STATE RESOLUTION FROM THE 2014 SESSION, SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

State of Arkansas
89th General Assembly
Fiscal Session, 2014

SR 16

By: Senators Irvin, Maloch

SENATE RESOLUTION

TO ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO DEVELOP A LONG-TERM FUNDING SOLUTION FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE NORFORK AND GREERS FERRY NATIONAL FISH HATCHERIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF COMMUNITIES DEPENDENT UPON THE COLD WATER FISHERIES THEY PROVIDE AND THE PERPETUATION OF ARKANSAS' WORLD-CLASS FISHERIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ARKANSANS.

Subtitle

ENCOURAGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO FIND A LONG-TERM FUNDING SOLUTION TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ARKANSAS'S FISH HATCHERIES.

WHEREAS, the United States Army Corps of Engineers created large impoundments on many of Arkansas' major rivers and streams decades ago, irreparably harming or displacing native fish stocks downstream of the dams; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service constructed the Greers Ferry National Fish Hatchery and the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery to mitigate the loss of pristine rivers and their fish populations for the people of Arkansas by replacing native sport fish with trout, a species more suitable for the conditions of many of the new reservoir tailwaters; and

WHEREAS, the trout fishery created by, and annually produced from, these mitigation hatcheries has grown into a world-renown sport fishery, annually providing upwards of \$175,000,000 in economic impact to the State of Arkansas from anglers; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk and Greers Ferry national fish hatcheries return \$89 and \$95 respectively, to the State of Arkansas for every dollar spent to operate the

facilities, providing a unique example of government efficiency and return on investment to the taxpayers of Arkansas and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the significance and importance of the Norfolk and Greers Ferry national fish hatcheries continue to be overlooked by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in their efforts to close the hatcheries to sport fish production and divert the operating funds to other programs; and

WHEREAS, the state cannot afford nor should it be expected to take on the statutory responsibilities of the federal government, especially responsibilities related to mitigation for water development projects, and is concerned with the closed process used by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate to conduct their comprehensive hatchery and workforce analysis; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas and its 160,000 trout anglers, who spend 1,900,000 hours annually pursuing trout in the state's rivers and streams, are in perpetual danger of losing this incredible fishing asset,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate urges the United States Congress to direct the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, working cooperatively with state agencies, federal water management agencies, federal land management agencies, anglers, the angling industry, and local chambers of commerce, to determine the viability of each fish hatchery owned and operated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the hatcheries determined to be economically, recreationally, and culturally significant, including Greers Ferry and Norfolk national fish hatcheries, the United States Congress and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service develop a sustainable federal funding source to keep the hatcheries operating and providing in sport fish production for future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to keep the mitigation hatcheries open and funded at levels equal to or greater than Fiscal Year 2014 until such time as a study of the solvency of the mitigation hatcheries is completed and future funding needs are resolved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this resolution, the Secretary of the Senate send a certified copy to each member of the Arkansas congressional delegation and Daniel M. Ashe, Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION, MARCH 2011, SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 202

BY KEISLING

A RESOLUTION relative to federal funding for the Erwin and Dale Hollow National Fish Hatcheries.

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service plans to cut the budgets for the Erwin and Dale Hollow National Fish Hatcheries; and

WHEREAS, these fish hatcheries provide the foundation for Tennessee's world-renowned trout fishery waters, which produce a total economic impact of well over seventy-six million dollars (\$76,000,000) annually while only costing taxpayers approximately one-million-four-hundred-thousand dollars (\$1,400,000) annually to operate. The hatcheries at Erwin and Dale Hollow alone generate two-million-seven-hundred-thousand dollars (\$2,700,000) in federal tax revenues, returning roughly two dollars (\$2.00) for every one dollar (\$1.00) invested; and

WHEREAS, seventy-five (75) years ago, the rivers in Tennessee were arguably some of the best warm/cool water fishing waters in America. Fisherman came from all over the country to experience once-in-a-lifetime fishing opportunities on Tennessee's beautiful river systems; and

WHEREAS, as a series of dams were being built within the State of Tennessee's river basins, the federal government assured the state's citizens that mitigation ef-

forts would be included to offset the loss of the rivers' incredibly productive native fishery. The key component of this commitment was the construction of Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery in 1965 near Dale Hollow Dam and the establishment of world-class trout waters below federal water development projects throughout the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Erwin National Fish Hatchery, established in 1897, supplies nine million (9,000,000) eyed rainbow trout eggs annually to support mitigation efforts by five (5) hatcheries in Tennessee and ten (10) hatcheries in six (6) other states; and

WHEREAS, Erwin National Fish Hatchery annually stocks thirty thousand pounds (30,000 lbs.) of spent rainbow trout brood stock, each weighing in excess of two-and-one-half pounds (2.5 lbs.), below federal water development projects and other waters throughout East Tennessee thus providing trophy class fisheries that attract fishermen from around the world; and

WHEREAS, these modest projects rank among the all-time success stories of our federal government, because of the overall economic impact and return on investment they produce; and

WHEREAS, fish and egg production at the Dale Hollow and Erwin National Fish Hatcheries employs eight hundred and forty-three (843) individuals in private sector jobs that provide goods and services to fishermen; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of small and large businesses employing thousands of individuals have been established in these world-class fishing areas because of the increase in tourism; and

WHEREAS, investment in the Dale Hollow and Erwin fish hatcheries has consistently demonstrated positive returns for more than a century. The federal government's goal to reduce the federal deficit and increase economic growth would be damaged, not enhanced, if funding for trout programs is reduced or eliminated to the detriment of its promise to Tennessee and the Nation, and to these small towns whose livelihood depends on the fish hatcheries; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly hereby memorializes the President and the Congress of the United States to continue the immediate and future funding of the national fish hatcheries at Erwin and Dale Hollow, and allow the investment in these hatcheries to continue to contribute to the economic vitality of these towns, the State of Tennessee, and the entire country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation, with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the *Congressional Record*.

TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION, APRIL 2011, SUBMITTED FOR THE
RECORD BY THE CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMAN'S FOUNDATION

HOUSE RESOLUTION 60

BY HAWK

A RESOLUTION relative to funding for the Erwin Fish Hatchery.

WHEREAS, the Erwin Fish Hatchery was created by an Act of Congress in 1894 and opened in November 1897; and

WHEREAS, for these 113-plus years, the Erwin Fish Hatchery has played a vital role in the development and growth of Erwin and Unicoi County by producing high quality, disease-free rainbow trout eggs that support fishery mitigation stocking, tribal stocking, and stocking of federal and state waters; and

WHEREAS, the Erwin Fish Hatchery provides tours for thousands of tourists annually, provides a home for Unicoi County's Heritage Museum, and partners with the Town of Erwin and TWRA to sponsor the annual Youth Outdoor Fishing Adventure for over 300 kids; and

WHEREAS, the Erwin Fish Hatchery creates a tremendous economic impact for the Town of Erwin, generating seventeen jobs, producing state and local tax revenue of \$48,294.00, and a total local economic output of \$1,531,934.00; and

WHEREAS, almost \$20 million in federal, state, and local tax revenue is generated annually by six National Fish Hatcheries. This represents a return to the federal treasury of 2.33 times more than the amount of funds necessary to operate these hatcheries; and

WHEREAS, these funds are used to fund beneficial federal programs that do not pay for themselves, so continuing to operate these six hatcheries makes good business sense; and

WHEREAS, eyed egg production and distribution from the Erwin National Fish Hatchery and the resulting trout stocking across the Southeast region generate employment for 3,277 people with a total economic output of \$298 million, a return of \$67.00 for every tax dollar spent; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that this body hereby opposes any reduction of funding for the National Fish Hatchery Operations that would result in the closing of Erwin National Fish Hatchery and encourage Tennessee's Congressional delegation, and especially Senator Lamar Alexander, Senator Bob Corker, and Congressman Phil Roe, to support federal funding for the National Fish Hatchery Operations-Mitigation for the 2012 fiscal year budget and strive to continue funding this worthwhile federal program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives; the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate; and each member of Tennessee's Congressional delegation.

