

DATE: 16 August 2017

TO: U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Chairman
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member

**RE: Professional Societies language in committee report accompanying FY2018
Dept. of Interior, Environment & Related Agencies Appropriations bill**

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, and Committee Members:

The undersigned organizations thank you for your recognition of the importance of professional societies in the committee report that accompanies the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY 2018) Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

House Report 115-238 highlights on page 7 the valuable role professional societies hold in assuring sound scientific management principles are applied to resources management through strengthening competencies of the federal workforce. Federal employees benefit greatly from participation in professional societies, which provide opportunities for continuing education, access and contribution to scientific journals, and meaningful interaction with other professionals. Such networking is key to enhancing collaboration between federal, state, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and private industries.

Increasing federal employee participation in professional societies of any discipline can substantially contribute to maximizing the efficiency and efficacy of an agency's ability to serve the American people. Professional societies are committed to supporting their members throughout each stage of their career. These organizations offer opportunities for professional development—such as certification programs and leadership training—and ways to invest in the next generation. Professional societies can also be a driving force behind initiatives to promote a diverse, thriving workforce and engage all members of a profession.

Societies like those mentioned in the report enable professionals to enhance their networks and broaden their understanding of prominent issues relevant to their field through annual conferences, scientific publications, and training workshops. These professional interactions and collaborations can help to cultivate innovative thinking, facilitate scientific debate, and spur new discoveries.

We thank you for recognizing the essential role of professional societies in supporting federal employees. We look forward to working with you as you move towards finalizing FY 2018 appropriations.

Sincerely,

American Association of Geographers
American Fisheries Society
American Society of Agronomy
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Forest Stewards Guild
The Wildlife Society

Society for Conservation Biology North America
Society for Ecological Restoration
Society for Range Management
Society of American Foresters
Society of Wetland Scientists
Soil Science Society of America