



Consortium of
Aquatic Science Societies

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

The Consortium of Aquatic Scientific Societies (CASS) is comprised of six professional societies representing diverse knowledge of the aquatic sciences. CASS members include the: American Fisheries Society, Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography, Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation, Phycological Society of America, Society for Freshwater Science, and Society of Wetland Scientists. Our collective membership totals almost 20,000 individuals that span the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations, and various tribal, state, and federal agencies. The CASS organizations represent professionals who combine deep subject-matter expertise, a commitment to independent objectivity, and the critical review of environmental information, along with a passion for the natural places and resources that form the foundation of American greatness. We support the development and use of the best available science to sustainably manage our freshwater, estuarine, coastal, and ocean resources to the benefit of the U.S. economy, environment, and public health and safety.

CASS writes in strong support of the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and EPA programs that support the research, conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems required by all U.S. citizens, who rely on clean and abundant water for their health and well-being. On March 16, the Trump Administration released a budget blueprint that identified drastic cuts to the EPA that would eliminate many critical programs that support sustainable use and economic development of aquatic resources. The Administration's internal spend plan memo from David A. Bloom, Acting CFO, dated March 21, directly targets many programs that protect and restore water resources. Among the programs listed for elimination: Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, and other geographic restoration programs; nonpoint source pollution grant funds; the National Estuary Program; and research grant programs on safe and sustainable water resources and climate change. We urge you to reject these recommendations and instead provide your full support to EPA and its aquatic science and management programs.

CASS recognizes that the Appropriations Committees face difficult decisions given fiscal constraints; we support EPA and the programs noted above because they are vital to our Nation's economic and environmental well-being, and are an efficient and effective use of funds appropriated by the federal government. They support a clean and adequate water supply, sustainable fish populations for food and recreation, natural and human communities that are resilient to hazards and changing climates, healthy and diverse aquatic ecosystems, and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities that protect America's conservation heritage and provide enormous economic and cultural benefit. The federal funding provides an enormous return on investment that sustains and creates jobs and protects lives and natural resources. We hope that the Committee will continue its support for these vital EPA programs.

Respectfully,



Joe Margraf
President, American Fisheries Society



Emily Bernhardt
President, Society for Freshwater Science



Tim Nelson
President, Psychological Society of America



Robert R. Twilley
President, Coastal and Estuarine Research
Federation



Linda Duguay
President, Association for the Sciences of
Limnology and Oceanography



Gillian Davies
President, Society of Wetland Scientists

Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies
c/o American Fisheries Society
Douglas Austen, Executive Director
425 Barlow Place, Suite 110
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-897-8616
dausten@fisheries.org