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  Society for Conservation Biology North America
American Fisheries Society  Society for Ecological Restoration
American Society of Agronomy  Society for Range Management
Crop Science Society of America  Society of American Foresters
Ecological Society of America  Society of Wetland Scientists
Forest Stewards Guild  Soil Science Society of America
The Wildlife Society