



December 13, 2017

The Honorable Mike Thompson
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 4459 - Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act of 2017

Dear Congressmen Thompson and Kelly:

On behalf of our organizations and the millions of members we represent across the country, we are writing to voice our strong support for H.R. 4459, the *Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act of 2017*. Your bipartisan legislation will help ensure that honest philanthropy in land conservation continues to be rewarded, while preventing those who would abuse a charitable incentive for profit. H.R. 4459 is both important and urgent. We hope that Congress will move swiftly to enact the bill.

In 2015, through your leadership and the bipartisan support of your colleagues, Congress made permanent an enhanced conservation easement tax deduction. This incentive helps Americans conserve their land voluntarily through charitable donations to qualified conservation organizations. Private land conservation brings with it many good economic, health and environmental benefits – and we must ensure these benefits continue for our country.

The ongoing exploitation of the conservation easement incentive by a few bad actors is giving a black eye to the entire program. We must prevent these bad actors from further abusing a tax provision Congress established with the best of intentions. The *Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act of 2017* directly targets the abusive transactions while continuing to reward true philanthropy that helps to conserve farms, ranches, working forests, wetlands and wildlife habitat for future generations. H.R. 4459 is straightforward, narrowly drafted and needed.

Our organizations serve the public interest by protecting America's working and natural landscapes – and the success of our work relies on the public's continued confidence in the integrity of tax incentives that encourage private landowners to voluntarily protect their land. We strongly support H.R. 4459 and, again, applaud you for taking action to curb abuse. Collectively, our organizations are ready to stand with you in advocating for passage of this bill. We and the millions of members we represent look forward to working with you to pass H.R. 4459, bolstering land conservation heroes and taxpayers across America.

Sincerely,

Ducks Unlimited

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Land Trust Alliance

The Nature Conservancy

Pheasants Forever Quail Forever

The Trust for Public Land

For further information, feel free to contact:

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