



January 12th, 2017

Dear Arkansas Senators and Representatives:

I am writing on behalf of the Arkansas Audubon Society, a group of citizens who, in addition to chasing birds with our binoculars, are committed to fostering a greater knowledge of the natural history of Arkansas and promoting the conservation of natural resources, including those public lands that many of us visit on a regular basis to appreciate nature's beauty and the services it provides for humanity and all life. With the transition to a new Congress and presidential administration, *we feel great concern for the direction our government is heading in terms of its stewardship of the environment.* In this letter, we address two recent events that highlight why we feel this way, and we urge you to represent the voices of your constituents in upcoming decisions regarding the natural environment.

First, the passage of H. Res. 5 in the House on the first day of the 115th Congress sounded alarm bells for our members because of the threat this resolution poses to federal lands. Section 3 (q) (1) of this resolution simplifies the process of handing over federal lands to state governments, which could have different goals for the management of these lands. We believe that ownership and management of current federal lands should remain in the hands of the federal government, not the states. These places were established for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, *all people* of America, and as such, the responsibility should fall on the shoulders of federal, not state, governments. In addition, the passage of this resolution removes consideration of the value, that these lands have for all citizens of the United States of America. Let me assure you that these lands have value, and not just in monetary terms, but value beyond any number man can assign to them.

Second, the nomination of Scott Pruitt for head of the Environmental Protection Agency is an insult to the organization and to the American public. Since being signed into creation by Richard Nixon, the EPA has led our nation to greater standards of environmental health and protection through its science-based decision-making and regulation. Pruitt's dismissals of the overwhelming scientific evidence (and consensus) for man-made climate change and negative environmental impacts of fracking demonstrate his lack of respect and understanding of the processes that guide the growth of knowledge and use of evidence-based reason in the development of our society and technology. Putting a man who has described himself as an activist against the EPA in charge of the EPA would be a mistake that could undo much of the progress we should be proud of as a nation.

We believe H.Res.5 and Scott Pruitt represent significant steps in the wrong direction when it comes to being environmental stewards. We urge you to consider the voices of us, your constituents, in matters concerning the protection of natural resources such as national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges, as well as the environmental in general. Caring for our natural environment should not be a partisan issue. Democrats and Republicans have a shared history of

working together to preserve environmental integrity. We all ask ourselves, what legacy do we want to leave our children? What example do we want to set? In the words of Lyndon Johnson,

If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to protection our natural resources with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. R. McClung". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" and "C".

Maureen R. McClung, Ph.D.
Conservation Chair
Arkansas Audubon Society

Department of Biology
Hendrix College
Conway, AR 72032