



March 18, 2022

The Honorable Krysten Sinema
United States Senator
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Hunting on National Wildlife Refuges & the Center for Biological Diversity
Lawsuit (USDC Montana, Case No. 9:21-cv-00144-DWM)**

Dear Senator Sinema:

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) is a 501c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, as well as educating outdoor enthusiasts on issues important to their passions. AZSFWC member, affiliate, and associate groups reach across the spectrum of hunting, angling, shooting, outdoor recreation, and businesses from across Arizona. Our member groups alone represent more than 16,000 people from Arizona.

AZSFWC has supported the expansion of hunting and angling opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges (NWR's) over the last couple of years and two Administrations. We provided input on the Station Specific expansion in our June 8, 2020 letter and additional expansion for the Bill Williams and Havasu refuges here in Arizona in our June 29, 2021 letter. For reference, both those letters are attached.

On November 29, 2021, the Center of Biological Diversity (CBD) filed suit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to stop some of the expansion of these hunting opportunities on several NWR's.

On February 4, 2022 – the FWS and CBD filed a joint motion in the case asking for a stay of the proceedings while they conduct settlement talks.

AZSFWC and the National hunting and conservation organizations listed below are requesting your assistance in persuading the FWS to cease further settlement discussions.

In the present litigation and prior to settlement talks, several hunting and conservation organizations informed the Department of Justice of their intent to file a motion to intervene in the case to ensure the priorities of sportsmen and women are considered by the Court and the parties. Unfortunately, none of the affected user groups were consulted before settlement talks began.

This lawsuit seeks to eliminate hunting expansion on nearly 100 NWRs. America's hunting, shooting sports and conservation organizations are deeply concerned about settlement talks

occurring without any organizations representing sportsmen and women involved in the process.

The CBD seeks to eliminate the 2020 expansion of hunting on 2.2 million acres of refuge lands, so it is not hard to imagine any settlement palatable to them would not involve the loss of hunting opportunities. We have also learned a lawyer for the US Department of Interior confirmed at a recent public meeting the settlement talks are including a phase out of ammunition and fishing tackle containing lead ammunition.

Traditionally Congress has demonstrated bipartisan support for hunting on NWRs, as this is one of the six statutorily designated priority uses of the nearly 100 million acre system¹ described in the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act. Hunting organizations have historically been able to depend on the FWS to fully defend hunting against litigation of this type ensuring the interests of sportsmen and women are represented at the table as the litigation proceeds.

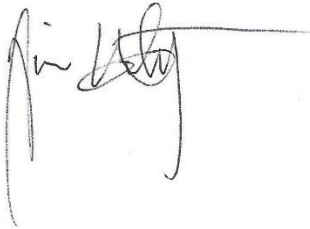
AZSFWC and 25 of our Member organizations (list attached), as well as the National organizations listed are asking for your help to do the following:

1. Protect ongoing and continued access to NWR's,
2. Encourage FWS to cease settlement discussions,
3. Request FWS to fully defend the CBD lawsuit.

This lawsuit and the backdoor negotiations threaten historic access to these public lands for sportsmen and women throughout the nation.

We appreciate your help and engagement to remedy this situation. Thank you!

Yours in Conservation,



Jim Unmacht
AZSFWC Executive Director

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Back Country Hunters and Anglers
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance

¹ 16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(3)(c) and 668ee (2).



AZSFWC Member Organizations Supporting Hunting On National Wildlife Refuges

Anglers United
AZ Antelope Foundation
AZ Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
AZ Bass Federation Nation
AZ Big Game Super Raffle
AZ Chapter of Safari Club International
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited
AZ Deer Association
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
AZ Elk Society
AZ Houndsmen's Association
AZ Outdoor Sports
AZ Predator Callers
AZ Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
Ben Avery Clay Busters
Christian Hunters of America
No Excuse Hunting and Outdoors
Outdoor Experience 4 All
Southern AZ Quail Forever
Southwest Wildlife Foundation
SRT Outdoors
The BASS Federation of AZ
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Valley of the Sun Quail Forever
Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club