May 17, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, shooters and outdoor enthusiasts that our organizations represent, we are writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of David Bernhardt as the next Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Through his public service on Capitol Hill and in the Department of the Interior (DOI), Mr. Bernhardt has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to conserving and protecting our nation’s natural, historic and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

David has a deeply held passion for conservation and historic preservation that is guided by his unwavering moral compass. David also has a strong track record of collaborating with diverse cross-sections of stakeholders to ensure that their best interests, not partisan politics, inform policy decisions that may affect them.

An avid hunter, angler and shooter, David recently volunteered his time to serve on the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Board of Game and Inland Fisheries, Mr. Bernhardt understands the value of state and federal partnerships on issues such as ensuring that states retain primary jurisdiction over fish and wildlife within their borders, and interagency collaboration to enhance and expand the public’s access to the lands that the public owns.
In 2006, Mr. Bernhardt was unanimously confirmed by the Senate to serve as the Solicitor of the Department of Interior. As solicitor, David was the chief legal officer and third ranking official for the Department. Prior to serving as Solicitor, David held several other positions at DOI including Deputy Solicitor, Deputy Chief of Staff, Counselor to the Secretary of the Interior and Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

During his time at DOI, Mr. Bernhardt demonstrated his interest and ability in finding solutions to complex problems like restoring wildlife habitat and navigating the complexities of the Endangered Species Act. He served as an integral part of the administration that:

- Worked with Congress and administratively to created 15 new National Wildlife Refuges and emphasized recovery goals under the Endangered Species Act.
- Took efforts to conserve the populations of both the bald eagle and the Yellowstone grizzly bear that led to the recovery and removal of the bald eagle from the Endangered Species List; and the proposed delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear population.
- Drafted 10-year plan to implement the Executive Order (E.O. 13443) to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.

We urge you to approve the confirmation of Mr. Bernhardt, so that the Senate may act to quickly confirm Mr. Bernhardt for this critical position at the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association  Quail Forever
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  Quality Deer Management Association
Boone and Crockett Club  Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Camp Fire Club of America  Safari Club International
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation  Shikar-Safari Club
Conservation Force  Sportsmen’s Alliance
Dallas Safari Club  Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Delta Waterfowl  Wild Sheep Foundation
Ducks Unlimited  Wildlife Forever
Houston Safari Club  Wildlife Management Institute
Masters of Foxhounds Association &  Wildlife Mississippi
Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Orion – The Hunter’s Institute
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America