



The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to promote sound management and conservation and speak with a collective voice on important fish and wildlife issues at the national level. Our mission is to protect state fish and wildlife authority; promote sound resource management; and strengthen government and private cooperation to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. All state fish and wildlife agencies are members of AFWA. The state fish and wildlife agencies have constitutional authority to manage fish and wildlife. They are charged with the on the ground implementation of fish and wildlife conservation in the United States.

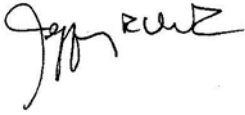
As such, free trade agreements can impact state fish and wildlife agencies ability to effectively manage fish and wildlife populations. For example, improving the ability of the US to trade in American Alligator or furbearer (e.g., bobcat, beaver) skins supports important conservation efforts for the American Alligator. It also provides continued markets for fur which is important since trapping of furbearers is a critical management tool. Additionally, the state wildlife agencies are critical to delivering Farm Bill conservation programs in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency.

We also offer the following specific comments.

1. We encourage the development of electronic permitting for issuance of CITES export permits.
2. We encourage consideration of eliminating the EU requirements for issuance of CITES import permits.
3. We encourage the rapid clearance of inbound shipments of alligator skins, products, meat and parts (both in the EU countries and in US) by customs officials.
4. We encourage rapid issuance of CITES export permits and clearance inspections by FWS and Customs
5. We also ask that the US provide adequate staffing at ports in the EU and US to expedite inspection and clearance process.
6. Sustainable use is the basis of the North American Model of Conservation and a number of the treaties and conventions that the US is a Party to such as CITES. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies encourages the sustainable, wise use of abundant wildlife resources for public benefit based on scientific management. Policies which add value to wild species conservation and encourage their sustainable use are ecologically sound. We encourage you to base your discussions on the sustainable use of fish and wildlife and include the concept of sustainable use within the free trade agreement.

When possible throughout the negotiations process, we ask that you reach out to state fish and wildlife agencies when issues surrounding fish, wildlife and their habitats arise. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffery R. Vonk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffery" being more prominent and the last name "Vonk" following in a similar style.

Jeffery R. Vonk
President
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
and Secretary, South Dakota Department
of Game, Fish & Parks