

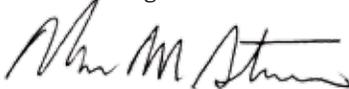
PASSING A COMPREHENSIVE SPORTSMEN'S ACT IN THE 114TH CONGRESS

JEFF CRANE
PRESIDENT, CONGRESSIONAL
SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION
■ B&C PROFESSIONAL MEMBER

It is obvious that the Boone and Crockett Club has paved the way in creating an extensive and integrative system for conservation. However, this system must constantly be nurtured. There will always be competition for funding for managing this system and special interest groups that have their own plans for how to use that funding.

In addition to Jeff and Gary, we have a great team of government affairs specialists in Washington—David Anderson, Dr. Greg Schildwachter, and Mitch Butler, led by Bob Model and the Club's Government Affairs Committee. We are constantly adapting to the diverse political, economic, social, technological, and environmental changes we face in order to maintain this impressive system of hunting and conservation.

Except for the late 1800s, at no other time in history has hunting and conservation been at such a crossroads in North America, where we still have the capacity to "win." The challenges are great, but the historic achievements and the financial, political, communication, and scientific assets of the Club's members place us in a unique position, unlike ANY other conservation organization, to not only protect our investment in hunting and conservation, but advance it for future generations. ■



As the 114th Congress convenes in their final year, leaders and members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) continue working to move a bipartisan package of pro-sportsmen's legislation. The Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act and The Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act, both introduced in 2015, aim to benefit America's sportsmen and sportswomen, addressing issues from enhancing recreational access to promoting wildlife conservation.

The end of 2015 saw a positive movement of both House and Senate packages. In October, the House Natural Resources Committee held a markup and passed the SHARE Act out of Committee with a vote of 21 to 15 in favor of the bill. In November, the

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed the first half of the Sportsmen's Act provisions, and the Environment and Public Works Committee is expected to hold a markup on the second half of the Senate package early in 2016.

With bipartisan support, these bills are indicative of the fact that hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and our outdoor traditions are not defined by or constrained to any partisan label. We are sportsmen and sportswomen because we appreciate and are stewards of America's great outdoors, regardless of political affiliation, race, religion, gender, or socio-economic standing. The bills have received written support from nearly 50 national hunting and angling conservation organizations who collectively represent millions of American sportsmen and sportswomen.

Among other important measures for sportsmen and sportswomen, provisions within the House and Senate sportsmen's packages will: add lead fishing line to the list of exempted products from EPA regulation, leaving regulatory authority to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state fish and wildlife agencies; require federal land managers to consider how management plans affect opportunities to engage in hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting; and enable states to allocate a greater proportion of federal funding to create and main-

tain shooting ranges.

Leaders of the CSC are working with partners within the hunting and angling community to gain more bipartisan supporters from the House and Senate and to pass a sportsmen's package that addresses important measures for the sportsmen's conservation community, users of our public resources, and conservation funding.

The importance of passing a comprehensive sportsmen's package helps sustain and enhance the "user pays, public benefits" program known as the American System of Conservation Funding, which has generated billions of dollars for conservation projects across the United States since 1937. These funds, from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, come from hunting and fishing licenses as well as excise taxes from hunting, fishing, and boating equipment. The term "conservationist" was originally attributed to sportsmen and sportswomen, as true stewards of our fish and wildlife resources. In October, 37 members of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, including the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and the Boone and Crockett Club, published a letter emphasizing the true identity of America's conservationists.

CSF and conservation partners urge you to contact your Members of Congress and ask them to support the SHARE Act in the House, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act in the Senate, and the swift passage of a sportsmen's bill crucial to conservation and our American traditions. ■



CSF President Jeff Crane testifies before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act.

COURTESY OF THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Find out who your members of Congress and Senators are and how to contact them by visiting www.congress.gov/members.