July 30, 2026

Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

We are writing in response to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Request for Information (RFI) regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) 2024 drain tile setback rule, and out of our shared commitment to habitat conservation, waterfowl, and waterfowl hunters across the United States. It is this common interest that links us all to maintaining the waterfowl and habitat value of USFWS easements.

Our members – primarily hunters and anglers – have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in these easements through private philanthropy and Duck Stamp purchases to conserve prairie wetlands. Any action that facilitates wetland drainage would disregard those investments, leading to fewer wetlands, fewer ducks, and the erosion of our hunting heritage.

We respectfully urge you to maintain the 60 years of precedent and uphold the USFWS's commitment to protecting publicly funded, voluntary conservation easements, critical wildlife habitat, and America's outdoor traditions.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Childs

Mr. Jason Tharpe
Chief Executive Officer, Delta Waterfowl

Mr. Adam Putnam
Chief Executive Officer, Ducks Unlimited

Mr. Jake Messerli
Chief Executive Officer, California Waterfowl

Mr. David Wielicki
Chief Executive Officer, South Carolina Waterfowl Association

cc: Senator John Thune, Majority Leader

Senator Rick Scott

Senator Tom Cotton

Speaker of the House, Representative Mike Johnson

House Majority Leader, Representative Steve Scalise