
ENSURING DIVERSIFIED FUNDING INTO THE FUTURE BY PASSAGE OF THE RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT (Poster)

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The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies assembled a panel of 26 national business and conservation leaders in 2015 to recommend a new mechanism to conserve all fish and wildlife. Known as the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources, the group recommended Congress dedicate up to \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program. These funds would be awarded to state wildlife management agencies for wildlife related conservation, recreation and education projects. In Montana, the funds would be used to more fully implement State Wildlife Action Plan priorities including on the ground conservation for a broad diversity of species and habitats. Federal House Bill 5650 "Recovering America's Wildlife" act was introduced during the fall of 2016 then reintroduced in December 2017. If passed and fully funded, the federal act could bring over \$29 million dollars annually to Montana but \$10 million in non-federal match would be needed each year. Proactive and partner based projects will be critical to ensure the best use of these funds but prior to that a broad based effort to pass the act is needed. Wildlife

enthusiasts, business owners, developers, researchers and others will be needed to argue it is in everyone's best interest to keep wildlife and habitat healthy, keep species from being federally listed, and maintain outdoor education and recreation opportunities.