

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

August 31, 2015

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, and Leader Pelosi,

The undersigned hunting and conservation organizations strongly oppose the “Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large Animal Trophies Act” (CECIL Act). This bill provides no benefit for wildlife conservation, would undermine proven international conservation strategies and directly conflicts with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

In the United States, hunting is recognized as a fundamental component of wildlife management and conservation. Regulated, fair-chase hunting facilitates the extremely successful North American Model of wildlife conservation. Through the payment of excise taxes and license fees, hunters have contributed billions of dollars that have underwritten the restoration of iconic American species, such as white-tailed deer, elk, and wild turkeys that were driven to the brink of extinction by market hunting during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. American sportsmen contribute nearly \$3 billion annually to the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat through the payment of license fees and excise taxes. International species benefit from hunting in similar ways. U.S. hunters bring important revenue into countries in Africa that contributes to wildlife and habitat management and restoration, anti-poaching efforts and social tolerance from the local communities that co-exist with native wildlife. We write to remind you of these conservation successes as the Administration and Congress consider responses to the potentially illegal killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe.

The appropriate and urgent response to the taking of Cecil is to gather the facts and determine whether or not the killing was indeed illegal. If it was, the individual(s) who violated the law should be prosecuted. However, efforts to use the killing of Cecil to limit the use of hunting, importation and exportation as wildlife management tools must be rejected. Specifically, the CECIL Act would significantly limit the use of hunting, importation and exportation as tools of wildlife management and conservation. Passage of the bill could also encourage anti-hunters to seek proposed listing of species, not to ensure wildlife restoration, but simply to place limitations on hunting.

Hunting and fishing are part of American culture, whether those activities are carried out in the U.S. or internationally. This fall, in communities from Juneau, Alaska, to Jacksonville, Florida as well as in Africa, Canada, Europe, Asia, South America and Australia, U.S. citizens will go afield to experience what the hunter and author John Madson described as “the inexpressible pleasure of mingling my life, however briefly, with that of a wild creature that I respect, admire, and value.” America’s 40 million sportsmen are proud conservationists and should not be penalized by an act that does not represent what hunting means to wildlife and to our heritage. We urge you not to pass the CECIL Act and to both vigorously enforce our laws regulating hunting and importation and steadfastly uphold the legacy of success created by the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Archery Trade Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Bear Trust International  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Buckmasters, Ltd.  
Campfire Club of America  
Catch-A-Dream Foundation  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Conservation Force  
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports  
Dallas Safari Club  
Delta Waterfowl  
Ducks Unlimited  
Houston Safari Club  
Hunting Heritage Trust  
Masters of Foxhounds Association  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Bear Foundation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Orion – The Hunter's Institute  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope and Young Club  
Quail Forever  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Shikar Safari Club International  
Sportsmen's Alliance  
Texas Wildlife Association  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Tread Lightly!  
Whitetails Unlimited  
Wildlife Forever  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Wildlife Mississippi  
Wild Sheep Foundation