

Archery Trade Association • Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies • Boone and Crockett Club • Bowhunting Preservation Alliance • Campfire Club of America • Catch-a-Dream Foundation • Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation • Dallas Safari Club • Delta Waterfowl Foundation • Masters of Foxhounds • Mule Deer Foundation • National Rifle Association • National Shooting Sports Foundation • National Wild Turkey Federation • North American Bear Foundation • Pheasants Forever • Pope and Young Club • Quail Forever • Quality Deer Management Association • Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation • Ruffed Grouse Society • Safari Club International • Tread Lightly! • U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance • Wild Sheep Foundation • Wildlife Forever • Wildlife Management Institute • Wildlife Mississippi

September 25, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

Our organizations seek your support for H.R. 2919, which is a bipartisan bill on a longstanding issue of controversy: environmental litigation.

Though differences on this topic run deep, there is no question that litigation has become a regular feature of environmental policy. Therefore, it must be understood and guided just as all wildlife and habitat conservation policy should be. We are concerned that litigation too often needlessly impedes the work of conservation agencies. Others maintain their lawsuits are filed in the public interest to push conservation. Representatives Lummis, Cohen, Garcia, and Collins have quietly and effectively developed a positive step toward understanding the situation and we ask you to join them.

H.R. 2919, the Open Book on the Equal Access to Justice Act, creates a public database and annual report accounting for the money paid by the government to reimburse legal fees and costs when it loses certain lawsuits per the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA). Records of these expenditures do not exist in any usable form, as determined by recent investigations by the Government Accountability Office. Without such records, there is no way to evaluate the amounts, purposes, and effects on public policy of these lawsuits. Tracking and reporting these payments will help clarify how and why certain lawsuits arise and, accordingly, how they can be obviated or prevented as the public interest dictates.

Another benefit of tracking and reporting EAJA payments is to support this law's original purpose of enabling seniors, veterans, and small businesses to dispute unfair treatment by the government. H.R. 2919 carefully protects these interests by respecting the privacy of their direct and personal claims against the government. The data provided by H.R. 2919 will help judge the effectiveness of EAJA in the behalf of these originally-intended beneficiaries.

Please contact either Rep. Lummis or Cohen to cosponsor H.R. 2919. Thank you for your consideration.