



February 9, 2009

RE: Support of Trout Unlimited (TU) for S. 22, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 140,000 members of Trout Unlimited nationwide, we write to express our strong support for the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2008 (Omnibus Bill). Our members stand shoulder to shoulder with thousands of other hunters and anglers throughout the country who also support the bill. If passed, the measure would safeguard some of the nation's best fish and wildlife habitat and places to hunt and fish. **We urge you to support the bill when it comes to the House floor in the days ahead and we urge you to oppose any motion to recommit. Amending the bill now would necessitate another round of Senate consideration, and because of the huge hurdles involved in passing the bill through the Senate at a later date this Congress, we view any motion to recommit as a procedural attempt to kill the Omnibus bill.**

The bill contains many provisions of great importance to sportsmen and women, including the measures below.

First, the bill would protect 1.2 million acres in the Wyoming Range from new oil and gas leasing while allowing already leased areas to be developed. The Wyoming Range is home to trophy mule deer and elk herds, as well as the West's largest herd of moose. Just as important, the Wyoming Range is home to three separate subspecies of cutthroat trout. It is a fishing paradise that is unmatched anywhere else in the West.

Contrary to the assertions of the bill's detractors, the Wyoming Range Legacy Act provision of the bill is one of its most valuable features. Opponents claim the Wyoming Range Legacy Act would take 8.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 300 million barrels of oil out of prospective production.

In fact, according to the U.S. Geologic Survey, the bill would only remove 1.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 5 million barrels of oil from top-down production. Directional drilling could still be employed to recover some of the gas and oil that would not be available from top-down drilling. Furthermore, the bill would not stop any ongoing production of gas or oil, nor prevent any future production on valid existing undeveloped leases. Additionally, leaseholders in the Wyoming Range would have the option of selling or donating their undeveloped leases to conservation interests.

Second, the Copper-Salmon Wilderness Act would protect 13,700 acres of headwater habitat along the Elk River, one of the best coastal steelhead and salmon rivers in the Northwest. By protecting the headwaters of the Elk River, which are still largely intact, the bill would fortify a trophy recreational and commercial fishery vital to the community of Port Orford, Oregon that attracts anglers from across the region. Sportsmen and women led the way for developing this provision because of the importance of preserving this area as a viable fishing destination in Oregon.

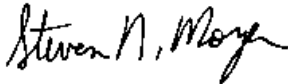
Third, the omnibus bill would also permanently protect the National Landscape Conservation System, a network of highly valuable public lands of acute interest to anglers and hunters. Included in that system is the famed Gunnison Gorge of Colorado, one of the best trophy trout fisheries in the West, and the Steens Mountain region, an irreplaceable hunting and fishing destination in eastern Oregon.

Fourth, The McKeon-Boxer California Wilderness provisions of the bill would designate as wilderness 470,000 acres along the East Side of the Sierra Nevada range and in the northern San Gabriel Mountains, and would designate stretches of three rivers as Wild and Scenic, including the Upper Owens River and Piru Creek, which are famous trout fisheries.

Lastly, we have worked with our conservation allies in support of a number of other noteworthy provisions in the Omnibus bill, including the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement, the Secure Water program, the West Virginia Wilderness provisions, the Cooperative Watershed Management program, and the Owyhee Public Land Management program. All of these have great fish and wildlife conservation merit, have local community support --including ranchers and farmers who are partners in watershed groups -- and have been developed in a bipartisan manner.

Every year, more and more land is developed, posted, or otherwise made unavailable for parents to take their kids fishing and hunting. The Omnibus bill is vital to protecting the lands and waters that sustain our communities and enrich the hunting and fishing legacy of this nation. For these reasons, we urge you to vote yes on this historic, bipartisan bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven N. Moyer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Moyer
V.P. of Government Affairs
Trout Unlimited