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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510--6025

October 26, 2000

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Congress provided an additional \$179 million for high priority land acquisitions as part of Title VIII of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001. The Congress directed that \$130 million of this amount be provided to the Department of the Interior, and that allocation of these funds to specific projects be determined at a later date by the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. Attached you will find the project lists.

Of the appropriations provided for Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve in Florida, the City of Jacksonville has committed to match on a dollar for dollar basis the first \$1,000,000. Additionally, the City of Jacksonville has committed to match on a two for one dollar basis the second \$1,000,000.

As for Sleeping Bear Dunes NL in Michigan, the funds provided in Title I of the Act combined with the \$3,000,000 of the Title VIII funds are to be used to purchase both the Laporte property and the Barratt property.

The funds provided for Silvio Conte NWR are to be distributed as follows: \$500,000 for land in Massachusetts and \$255,000 for land in Vermont.

Within previously appropriated funds for land acquisition at Stewart B. McKinney NWR, the Committees direct the Fish and Wildlife Service to reprogram \$1,600,000 from Ram Island to Calves Island. The Committees expect that these funds, combined with past appropriations for Calves Island, charitable contributions, and the \$400,000 provided for the refuge under Title VIII, will complete the Calves Island purchase.

The Committee understands that a private corporation currently holds a license agreement for a fish transshipment operation in the Palmyra Atoll and that the purchase of the atoll by the Fish and Wildlife Service and by The Nature Conservancy will not terminate the current license. The Committees understand that the sale of the land is subject to the license agreement and expect the land owners to fulfill the terms of the agreement. The corporation is entitled to the full benefits of its current license. Additionally, the Committees stress that the corporation shall

be treated by federal agents in the same professional manner as The Nature Conservancy or other entities operating on the atoll.

Furthermore, the Committees understand that a formal request has been made to the Department of Interior's Inspector General to initiate a criminal and civil investigation regarding alleged Migratory Bird Treaty Act violations on the atoll. These allegations should, at a minimum, receive a preliminary review by the Inspector General within the next two months.

Of the \$5,000,000 provided for the Nisqually NWR in Washington, \$2,000,000 is to be provided for the East Bluff. Improved protection of the lower Nisqually watershed and Delta is greatly needed to maintain habitat quality at Nisqually NWR. Land protection of the forested and riparian bluffs on the eastern boundary of Nisqually NWR is needed to maintain wildlife corridors and protect water and habitat quality. These lands border the eastern shore of the Nisqually River and Salmon Creek. Forested bluff habitat is available to be purchased from Weyerhaeuser to provide permanent protection of the slope and top of the bluff, similar to what has been done on the western boundary of the Refuge. Protection is urgently needed, because these forested habitats are planned for development in the near future, unless they are purchased for land protection purposes.

The remaining \$3,000,000 for the Nisqually NWR is to be used for the Black River Unit. The Black River lies south of Olympia, Washington on the edge of the densely populated Puget Sound region. The Black River Unit of the Nisqually NWR provides high quality habitat for coho and chinook salmon, steelhead trout as well as migratory birds and a diversity of other species. In addition, it provides recreational and wildlife-viewing opportunities to the growing population of Olympia. The Fish and Wildlife Service is currently working with eleven willing sellers owning over 500 acres along the Black River. These properties are adjacent to the Black River and are under the threat of being subdivided and developed as housing tracts unless they are purchased for land protection purposes.

We appreciate your suggestions with regard to the allocation of Title VIII funds and have provided funding for many of the projects on the list that you submitted. Other projects on your list have not been included, either because purchase deals have not been completed or because the limited funds available are required for other high priority projects.

We look forward to working with you to implement these acquisitions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert C. Byrd
Robert C. Byrd
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
United States Senate

/s/ Slade Gorton
Slade Gorton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
United States Senate

/s/ Ralph Regula
Ralph Regula
Chairman on
Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

/s/ Norm Dicks
Norm Dicks
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives

FWS

<i>Area (State)</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR (TX)	\$500,000
Balcones Canyonlands NWR (TX)	750,000
Canaan Valley NWR (WV)	7,000,000
Centennial Valley NWR (MT)	1,100,000
Don Edwards SF Bay NWR (Cargill) (CA)	8,000,000
Great Meadows Complex (MA)	2,000,000
Great Swamp NWR (NJ)	1,000,000
Hakalau Forest NWR (HI)	500,000
Harris Neck NWR (GA)	400,000
J.N. Ding Darling NWR (FL)	3,000,000
Lake Umbagog NWR (NH)	3,000,000
Minnesota Valley NWR (MN)	1,000,000
Montezuma NWR (NY)	500,000
Nisqually NWR (WA)	5,000,000
Ottawa NWR (OH)	1,000,000
Palmyra Atoll/Kingman Reef (HI)	8,250,000
Patoka River Islands NWR (IN)	500,000
Pelican Island NWR (Montgomery tract) (FL)	2,800,000
Prime Hook NWR (DE)	700,000
Rachel Carson NWR (ME)	2,000,000
Rappahannock River NWR (incl. Mt. Landing Creek) (VA)	2,000,000
Rhode Island NWR Complex (RI)	2,000,000
San Diego NWR (CA)	1,500,000
Silvio Conte NWR (MA/VT)	755,000
Stewart McKinney NWR (CT)	400,000
Waccamaw NWR (SC)	1,000,000
Wallkill River NWR (NJ)	2,000,000
Subtotal	\$58,655,000