

NINETY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 58

Introduced by Schrock, 38

WHEREAS, America and Nebraska are blessed with a wide diversity of native wildlife which in various ways enriches the lives of the human population of this country; and

WHEREAS, this variety and abundance of wildlife forms the basis for outdoor recreation, interpretation, and education experiences and enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, in the face of declining wildlife populations, increasing participation in wildlife-associated recreation, and the growing demand by Nebraskans and from people all across the country for information, services, conservation action, and additional opportunities to enjoy and learn about wildlife, intensified efforts are necessary to protect, preserve, and manage all forms of wildlife, particularly nongame species in Nebraska and throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, Nebraska, as well as the other states, has relied on hunters and anglers to provide the bulk of the financial support for fish and wildlife programs through their purchase of hunting and fishing licenses, and from the federal excise taxes they pay on sporting arms and ammunition, fishing tackle, and other equipment. While this support has provided state fish and wildlife agencies the means to conserve sport fish and game species with

exceptional results, it has been insufficient to address the needs of 85 percent of Nebraska's wildlife that is not hunted, fished, or trapped, including the needs of 220 nongame species that are rare, declining, or at-risk; and

WHEREAS, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides for a program to acquire federal and state recreation lands and to assist states and local communities with acquiring and developing recreation sites and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the LWCF has been an American success story in open space protection, responsible for nearly seven million acres of parkland, refuges, and open spaces and the development of more than 37,000 state parks and recreation projects since its enactment in 1964; and

WHEREAS, Nebraska has received \$36 million worth of improvements to state and city parks and for the construction of swimming pools, ball diamonds, and other outdoor recreation facilities from the LWCF since 1965; and

WHEREAS, for more than a decade Congress has diverted a majority of the LWCF authorized annual \$900 million appropriation to programs unrelated to conservation and recreation, and for the past five years has denied the states critical matching grants for land acquisition; and

WHEREAS, there are two bills now before Congress, H.R.701 and S.25, both cited as the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 (CRA), that propose to reinvest a portion of the revenue that the federal government obtains from oil and gas development in the Outer Continental Shelf in wildlife conservation and associated recreation activities, outdoor recreation facilities and parklands,

and conservation education, and will provide significant benefits to the conservation of wildlife resources in Nebraska and to the citizens of the state through additional and enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities, conservation education, and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of H.R.701 and S.25 are consistent with the mission of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and will establish a much needed source of permanent and dedicated funding that will meet a variety of unmet wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation needs in Nebraska, particularly H.R.701, which will provide a higher level of funding than S.25; and

WHEREAS, Governor Mike Johanns has endorsed the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 with a letter to Nebraska's Congressional delegation expressing his support for the act and encouraging the delegation to use their influence to ensure passage of a bill in the Congress.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NINETY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Nebraska Legislature fully supports the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 and encourages the Nebraska Congressional Delegation to help reconcile the House and Senate bills to ensure passage of a bill during the current session of Congress.

2. That the Clerk of the Legislature transmit copies of this resolution to each member of the Nebraska Congressional Delegation.

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PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATURE

I, Patrick J. O'Donnell, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Legislative Resolution 58, which was passed by the Legislature of Nebraska in the Ninety-sixth Legislature, First Session, on the XXXX(words)XXXX day of March 1999.

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CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE