Representative Matt Rosendale  
1037 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  

July 18th, 2022  

Dear Representative Rosendale,  

The undersigned organizations represent tens-of-thousands of hunters across the state of Montana. Each organization is committed to preserving our sporting opportunities and understands the importance of funding conservation measures to conserve the fish and wildlife populations. We write to urge you to withdraw your co-sponsorship of H.R. 8167, the RETURN Act, which would effectively repeal the Pittman-Robertson Act’s funding mechanism.  

The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act has served as the essential foundation of our country’s world-leading, and highly successful wildlife conservation model, and has been responsible for the recovery of dozens of wildlife species over the past 85 years. It is the leading source for all wildlife conservation in America. In 2022, Pittman-Roberston has provided $1.5 billion to state conservation efforts, with over $28 million to Montana alone, to support outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife conservation.  

Pittman-Robertson’s effectiveness is due to funding work at the state level in each of our 50 state wildlife agencies. This ensures that these dollars get to the ground and make an impact. Pittman-Robertson is the backbone of the management that ensures that fish and wildlife that are pursued by hunters and anglers continue to flourish. It is a key element in the phrase hunters proclaim proudly: “hunting is conservation”.  

We are strongly opposed to this bill and view it as an assault on critically-needed wildlife funding, but also as a recruitment tool for hunting and shooting sports. It’s a program that is a point of pride among sportsmen.  

Below are additional points to consider that further our opposition to H.R. 8167:  

- These funds, while critical to hunting and angling and those fish and wildlife, are also vital to the building of sport-shooting ranges. Repealing these funds hurts the sport-shooting and recreational shooting industries as citizens need places to recreationally shoot.  
- These funds are critical to programming in many states that are used to teach the next generations of hunters and anglers the skills necessary to get outdoors.  
- It is expected that anti-hunting organizations will be strongly supporting the bill behind the scenes, or even openly, because they understand decoupling the funding of state wildlife agency wildlife restoration projects from the funds generated from firearm sales will significantly damage hunting across our nation.
Montana hunters take pride in being the primary source of funding for state wildlife management agencies through the Pittman-Robertson Act as well as hunting/fishing license sales. These funding mechanisms are critical to the future persistence of both game and non-game species. We again urge you to listen to the voices of hunters across the state and withdraw your support for H.R. 8167. Thank you for considering our opposition and request.

Sincerely,

Montana Wildlife Federation
Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association
Laurel Rod and Gun Club
Bearpaw Bowmen
Hellgate Hunters and Anglers
Montana Artemis Alliance
Helena Hunters and Anglers
American Bear Foundation
Flathead Wildlife Inc.
Montana Union Sportsmen’s Alliance
Anaconda Sportsmen’s Club
Public Land Water Access Association
Traditional Bowhunters of Montana