



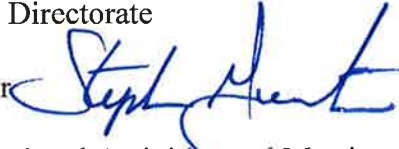
United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Response Reply to:
FWS/AES-CLA/059896

AUG 12 2015

To: Service Directorate
From: **Deputy** Director 
Subject: Congressional Activities and Meetings

It is important that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees build and maintain relationships with Members of Congress and their staff both at the local level and on Capitol Hill. As the Service's Director, I want to stress the need for – and the importance of – a coordinated approach among the field, regional and Headquarters offices regarding congressional activities. This is especially true as it relates to Capitol Hill visits and legislative and policy issues.

The Service's Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (CLA) in Headquarters serve as the central clearinghouse for our congressional and legislative activities. CLA coordinates all meetings on Capitol Hill; provides input to congressional staff on legislation; develops the Service's position on legislation; and oversees other congressional activities. The Service's Division of Budget works directly with the House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members and staff on funding issues and coordinates this work with CLA.

In order to ensure that Service congressional activities are coordinated, any Service employee planning meetings in Washington, D.C., with Members of Congress or their staff must inform the Service's CLA Chief via email one week prior to scheduling any meetings through the following procedures:

- 1) when planning congressional meetings in Washington, D.C., regional and field office personnel should work with their regional congressional liaisons;
- 2) the regional liaisons will then coordinate with CLA;
- 3) Headquarters program staff planning congressional meetings should work directly with staff in CLA; and
- 4) any visits with Appropriations Committee Members or their staff must also be communicated to the Service's Division of Budget Chief via email.

Information on the Service's congressional meetings is reflected in a weekly Meeting Memo prepared by CLA and shared with the Directorate and Regional External Affairs offices. The Service is also required to report all congressional meetings to the Department of the Interior.

Congressional meetings that are intended to establish the Service's presence or identity on Capitol Hill by focusing generally on Service programs, policies, and positions must be approved by the appropriate Regional Director or Assistant Director, and that Directorate member must also inform the Director's office of the intent to schedule the meeting(s) at least two weeks prior to any contact with congressional offices. This includes meetings that involve more than a courtesy visit or brief update for a small number of Congressional Members on a specific issue, or those meetings that may have *particular consequences for funding or legislation*. For example, if a program or region would like to schedule a number of meetings regarding a specific program or issue, those meetings should be approved by the appropriate Regional Director or Assistant Director and communicated to the Director's office.

In order for the Service to be truly effective in our relationships and communications with Congress, our efforts must be well coordinated. I expect everyone in the Service to keep CLA and the Director's office fully informed regarding all congressional activities. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Martin Kodis, CLA Chief at (703) 358-2241, or your regional CLA specialist.