



April 26, 2022

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

At the Committee on Finance’s hearing on the President’s Fiscal Year 2023 Budget and 2021 Filing Season on April 7, a request was made for the Committee to hold a hearing to get to the bottom of abusive syndicated conservation easement transactions. As representatives of the national land conservation, appraisal, and historic preservation communities, we wholly endorse that request.

It is time to set the record straight about the profiteering taking place using a program designed to preserve our open lands, wildlife habitat, productive farms and ranches, and historic resources through charitable giving. It is also time for Congress to enact bipartisan, bicameral legislation introduced by Senators Stabenow, Daines, Wyden and Grassley – the *Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act* – to halt further abuse.

After an extensive bipartisan investigation into these abusive transactions, the Committee released a report in August 2020 concluding that they could not be characterized as anything other than abusive tax shelters. Recent federal criminal indictments describe transactions similar in structure and nature to those investigated by the Committee and many others subject to ongoing enforcement actions by the IRS. A hearing would reveal for senators and the public the truly egregious nature of these syndicated transactions and the need to shut down the small group of bad actors behind them all.

We thank you in advance for considering the request for a Committee hearing. We look forward to working with the Committee to help protect this critical charitable conservation program and are prepared to provide assistance as the hearing is organized.

Sincerely,

*American Society of Farm Managers
and Rural Appraisers*

Land Trust Alliance

The Nature Conservancy

American Society of Appraisers

*National Trust for
Historic Preservation*

*Theodore Roosevelt
Conservation Partnership*

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Partnership of Rangeland Trusts

The Trust for Public Land

Appraisal Institute

Pheasants Forever Quail Forever

Ducks Unlimited

The Conservation Fund

CC: Senate Finance Committee members

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