

*Here's a sample letter to get you started. Personalize your letter to reflect your opinion. Thank you for your comments regarding this rule!*

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The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp plays a vital role in advancing wetland and grassland conservation, preserving valuable habitats for wetland birds and for future generations. The Federal Duck Stamp program, with its tremendous scope, reach, and value has celebrated our American culture and heritage since 1934.

The proposed rule would make the theme "Celebrating Our Waterfowl Hunting Heritage" and the mandatory inclusion of an appropriate hunting element permanent, beginning with the 2020 Contest. Each entry would be required to include one or more waterfowl hunting specific elements or a waterfowl hunting scene as part of the artwork.

If made permanent, this proposal will limit, not advance, the Stamp or the Stamp Art Contest.

The limits placed on the creativity of artists by this rule will contribute to the already steady decline in the number of contest entries.

We greatly appreciate the hunting community. They have provided most of the dollars to support the purchase of wetlands in America. Even with their current unwavering support the number of stamps purchased continues to decline as the number of hunters decline.

The biggest opportunity for increased sales is with others that use and appreciate the National Wildlife Refuge System and our public lands and purchase the stamp as a way of supporting conservation. We need to broaden the base of support to include the growing number of non-consumptive citizens who value land protection.

Framing the Stamp as exclusively within the context of America's hunting heritage does a disservice to the wide range of Stamp existing and potential purchasers. If more Stamps are not sold, not only will the Stamp and the Contest be negatively impacted, but waterfowl hunting and hunters who benefit most from this program, along with others who use our public lands, will see the impact of this program on preservation of waterfowl habitat shrink. This proposal would promote the theme "celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage" at the expense of focusing on growing the program to insure its transformative impact well into the future.

In summary, this proposal will not increase Art Contest participants, generate increased Stamp revenue, grow the number Stamp collectors, expand sales to nonhunters, and will not raise

appreciation for the Stamp itself. The pending permanent rule change will negatively impact the Stamp and the Stamp Art Contest.

In 1976, Congress changed the name of the Stamp from “The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp” to “The Migratory Bird Hunting *and Conservation* Stamp” In order to acknowledge the rich tradition of the broad diversity of duck stamp supporters. This pending proposal is a step backward and should not be implemented.