

March 23, 2012

Fourth District U.S. Rep. Mike Ross
2436 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Representative Ross,

I was extremely disappointed to learn that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service once again plans to eliminate the budgets for the mitigation hatcheries which includes the trout hatcheries below Norfolk and Greers Ferry dams. These facilities, which have an economic impact of over \$158 million annually at a cost to the taxpayers of about \$1.5 million a year, provide the very foundation for Arkansas's world-renowned trout fishery. These two hatcheries alone generate \$5.5 million in federal tax revenues, or roughly \$3.65 for every \$1.00 invested. The contribution to the economy amounts to over \$100 for every \$1.00 of operational budget spent.

These modest projects rank among the all-time success stories of our federal government. In addition, fish production at the Norfolk NFH provides employment for 994 individuals in the area, while the Greers Ferry NFH has resulted in another 752 jobs. Dozens of resorts now line the Norfolk, White and Little Red Rivers which provide recreation for thousands of visitors each year and bring in the much needed tax dollars that our local economies depend on.

As a concerned citizen, I am seriously concerned about the ever-growing federal deficit, but abandoning the trout program would be contrary to this effort. This is an investment that has demonstrated positive returns year in and year out for over half a century. Closing the hatcheries would be a short-sighted action by our Federal Government which will quickly result in even fewer tax dollars flowing into Washington.

I respectfully request that you demonstrate your leadership in Congress by having the Federal Government "Fully Fund" these Federal Fish Hatcheries and to make provisions that they will be "Permanently Funded" in the years to come.

Sincerely,
