United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

On December 14, 2007, you received a letter from 47 United States Senators requesting that the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service remove restrictions on the transport and carrying of firearms by law-abiding gun owners. We are pleased to join this effort.

As you know, the current regulatory framework for carrying and transporting firearms on lands managed by the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service restricts the rights of law-abiding individuals to possess and transport firearms. These regulations also preempt state regulatory frameworks for transporting and carrying firearms, thus invalidating concealed weapons permits and other state laws that allow law-abiding citizens to transport and carry firearms.

We certainly understand that these regulations were implemented in order to stop poaching and to enhance public safety. However, under the regulatory change we propose, the Department of the Interior and the states would still be able to regulate the use of firearms, such as to prohibit poaching and the discharge of firearms on lands managed by these agencies. Furthermore, we do not believe that allowing law-abiding citizens to transport and carry firearms – rather than forcing them to disassemble or store them in their trunks – will increase the chances that they will be tempted to violate prohibitions on discharge.

We therefore request that the Department of the Interior modify these regulations to allow the transport and carrying of firearms consistent with state law applicable where National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service sites are located. Such regulatory changes would respect the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners, while providing a consistent application of state weapons laws across all federal public land ownership boundaries.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with you. Please treat this letter in conformance with all applicable procedural rules and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,

Senator Russell Feingold

Senator Arlen Specter

Senator Christopher Bond

Senator Roger Wicker