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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have today approved H.R. 5608, a bill which provides for the continued authorization of funds with which to purchase wetlands for the protection of migratory waterfowl. However, I am disappointed that the Congress did not accept certain Administration recommendations regarding this legislation.

To accomplish the objectives of this program, and to do so in the most sound financial manner, this Administration had proposed to Congress two changes. First, I proposed that the Secretary of the Interior be authorized to increase the price of the the Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Stamp, the so-called "duck stamp," considering both the increasing cost of buying wetlands and other costs incurred in conserving waterfowl. Since 1972, the price of a "duck stamp" has been \$5.00, the maximum allowed by law. Most duck hunters should be willing to pay up to \$10.00 for a stamp to help pay the cost of conserving this resource. A \$10.00 "duck stamp" would double the revenues used to purchase wetlands, making approximately \$24 million available annually.

Second, I proposed that the 17% of all migratory waterfowl hunters who do not currently need to buy stamps be required to have them. I refer to hunters under the age of 16, who are already required by 36 States to purchase hunting licenses.

Enactment of both proposals would not only have generated more revenues, enabling us to buy wetlands sooner, but would have made the acquisition program more nearly self-financing.

I therefore urge the Congress to reconsider these proposals and enact them into law.

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