Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 3, 2014

Lt. Col. John L. Hudson
Division Commanding General
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nasvhille District
550 Main Street, Room 10524
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

The Honorable Daniel M. Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Lt. Col. Hudson and Director Ashe:

We write today about a matter of great concern to the economic wellbeing of the Lake Cumberland area in southeastern Kentucky.

Lake Cumberland has a long history serving as one of Kentucky's most popular recreational tourist attractions, drawing millions of visitors and dollars annually to rural Kentucky. As you may know, the repair of the Wolf Creek Dam began in 2007 and has led to extremely low water levels that have damaged the area's ability to attract tourists. The past seven years of reduced water levels have not only hurt small businesses that rely on this tourism, but have also strained local governments as local towns have had to lower their water intake. Marinas have had to spend valuable dollars on boat ramp upgrades and dock relocations; dollars that could have been spent on growing businesses, hiring new workers and enhancing local commerce. In addition, the drawdown of water has deterred tourism as a perception has been created among potential visitors that the lake is no longer suitable for boating, fishing and water sports.

Despite all of these serious economic concerns, on January 29, 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced its intent to further delay the raising of the water levels on Lake Cumberland. The Corps announced this was due to the presence of an endangered species of fish, the Duskytail Darter, in the lake's tributaries, which requires the agencies to undertake a Biological Assessment designed to "minimize any potential impacts to this species."

We urge your agencies to immediately collaborate on the Biological Assessment and, in so doing, use your agencies' discretion in the resulting Biological Opinion to resolve any potential problems in a manner that would allow for restoring the higher water levels on which the local

community relies. It is critical that Lake Cumberland be able to raise water levels adequate to support tourism prior to the peak season in 2014. It is well past time for the lake to return to its full capacity.

We thank you for your time and consideration. Should you need immediate assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Tate Bennett with Senator McConnell at (202) 224-2541.

Sincerely,

MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

RAND PAUL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

HAL ROGERS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

ED WHITFIELD
MEMBER OF CONGRESS