



North American Falconers Association

April 10, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture. I know that you will do wonderful things in and for the Department and on behalf of the North American Falconers' Association (NAFA), I wish you the greatest success.

In recent months budget issues within the Department have surfaced that I wish to bring to your attention. Rumors abound regarding possible budget cuts that will affect the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS, specifically Wildlife Services, has provided tremendous service to this country for many years and I encourage you to continue to budget funds within your departmental budget for this important part of the USDA.

APHIS provides valuable and immeasurable services to cattle and sheep ranchers, particularly in the west. APHIS has for years worked with states and with local ranchers to establish depredation areas to humanely trap and remove depredating golden eagles and place many of those eagles in the hands of qualified, permitted falconers who want them, in keeping with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. This is a win-win for everyone and for the eagles. Naturally, funding is required to provide the expert personnel required to accomplish this. APHIS employs such people now and they have been doing a wonderful job for years. On behalf of the North American Falconers' Association, I ask that you continue to budget for this valuable service.

Sincerely,

Dan Cecchini, Jr. President
North American Falconers' Association