**TOOLKIT FOR HUNTERS AND ANGLERS**

**RECOVERING AMERICA’S WILDLIFE ACT**

**URGENT ACTION**

We have created this simple toolkit to help you take easy actions to engage your network and urge Congressional representatives to vote YES and pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act. Please adapt/customize as you wish.

**Cover Letter to use with your name to your network of hunters and anglers:**

**ADD DATE**

**To hunters and anglers**

Our shared love for fish and wildlife has led to remarkable conservation successes. Unfortunately, we have more to do. Many species of wildlife are declining across every kind of habitat, from trout-fishing waters to bobwhite quail and other upland bird-hunting grasslands. In fact, a third of our nation’s species are at increased risk from meadowlarks that share the bobwhite’s grasslands to salamanders that share the trout streams.

To save fish and wildlife, our solutions must match the magnitude of the crisis. The good news? After years of your staunch support, the bipartisan supported [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act) is close to the finish line. **The time is now.** **Our goal is for bill passage this summer.** Please help rally fellow hunters and anglers today!

The Act will dedicate $1.39 billion annually to states and tribal nations for proactive, on-the-ground conservation measures, helping wildlife at risk and restoring habitat used by game and fish and all other species nationwide. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act builds on sportsmen-led successes of bringing back wildlife in trouble— from wood ducks to white-tailed deer, and striped bass. With more than 82 million hunters and anglers in the U.S., you make up a powerful voice for wildlife.

This simple toolkit is designed to help you reach fellow hunters and anglers with easy-to-do and meaningful actions to support this bill. Let’s get this legislation passed and signed into law this summer!

With gratitude for all you do for the future of fish and wildlife,

(ADD YOUR SIGNATURE)

**TOOLKIT FOR HUNTERS AND ANGLERS**

**MENU**

1. **Share this letter with hunters and anglers.**
2. **Share this special message from Senator Heinrich to hunters and anglers**
3. **Run this News alert.**
4. **Share script for calling Congress**
5. **Add your group to the sign-on letter of support.**
6. **Examples of game species that will benefit.**
7. **Benefits to hunters and anglers**
8. **Funding Source**
9. **More Resources**

**1. Share this letter** with hunting and angling clubs, groups, and other networks via the channels you use—from newsletters to Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Feel free to customize.

**To my fellow hunters and anglers,**

Whether fishing a trout stream or hiking the uplands with a favorite hunting dog, we all have witnessed wildlife spectacles—like river otters tussling, swallows wheeling, or tree frogs chorusing. I never want those special moments to become only memories, but otters, swallows, and frogs join a third of all species in North America in serious trouble.

That’s why I’m urging you to join me in championing the bipartisan [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act) – right now. With your support, we anticipate a vote in Congress this summer. Every vote in favor is critical to pass the bill.

This bill dedicates $1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies and $97 million to tribal nations for proactive and voluntary conservation aimed at preventing species from becoming endangered as well as those already imperiled. Restoring habitats for at-risk wildlife like monarch butterflies will benefit quail and other game species. Funding from this Act also will directly assist struggling fish and game species, from black ducks to native trout as identified by the State Wildlife Action Plans.

Today, more than half of funding for state fish and wildlife agencies comes from hunting and angling license fees. While the sporting community is proud to pay, it’s time for all who enjoy America’s wildlife to chip in a lot more.

Hunters and anglers are among America’s leading conservationists and care about these issues deeply. But the wildlife crisis is growing while these revenues are shrinking with fewer Americans hunting. Wildlife managers with states, territories, and tribal nations are sorely underfunded to respond to the accelerating threats.

In fact, agencies have just five percent of the funding needed to address the full wildlife crisis that extends to 12,000 species in trouble. Those species range from hummingbirds to bobwhite quail, and from freshwater mussels (critical to filtering pollutants) to the greenback cutthroat trout and lake sturgeon. Wildlife is facing a barrage of threats that include habitat loss, severe weather, pollution, disease, and invasive species.

But we know from experience that when we invest, wildlife wins. We’ve got a legacy of recovery stories to encourage us –from bringing back wild turkeys and white-tailed deer to the return of our nation’s symbol, the bald eagle. Will you join me in spreading the word, sending out alerts, and contacting congressional representatives? Tell your friends. Enlist others. Let’s pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act this summer!

[TAKE ACTION.](https://support.nwfactionfund.org/page/27217/action/1?_ga=2.61411372.1095605684.1647359298-1334846324.1647359298)

Thank you,

(Signed..)

2. Share this podcast: [The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act with lead sponsor, Senator Martin Heinrich](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/zZD7CPNM9vfv1k1XszhjMH?domain=nwfoutdoors.org/)

National Wildlife Federation’s Outdoors Team staff, Aaron and Bill, sit down with Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico to discuss the Recovering America's Wildlife Act - what it is, what it aims to accomplish, and what we need to do to get I passed. Senator Heinrich is the leading sporting advocate in Congress and has worked diligently on numerous pieces of conservation legislation. We cover his perspectives of Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, how it will help state agencies, the opportunities to mitigate wildfire and its impacts, and his opinion that Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will be "the most impactful wildlife conservation investment in U.S. history". Senator Heinrich has also been a champion on combating CWD. We ask him for an update on the Senate companion legislation to the passed House version of the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act.

After listening, be sure to take Senator Heinrich's advice: ["Reach out to your house member and both of your senators. Tell them Recovering America's Wildlife Act is good policy. It's good for our sporting communities. It's good for wildlife. It's bipartisan. Let's get this thing done!"](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/eJeSCQWN2wFB1y1PIPtmGO?domain=support.nwf.org)

Direction link to listen to this episode: [https://www.nwfoutdoors.org/e/the-recovering-america-s-wildlife-act-with-lead-sponsor-senator-martin-heinrich/](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/zZD7CPNM9vfv1k1XszhjMH?domain=nwfoutdoors.org/)

**Links to share & social media guidance with graphic (thanks for helping us spread the word):**

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cc8QuYNrV4l/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/2i3CCR6M0xinDzDWhPTuip?domain=instagram.com)

Facebook: [https://fb.watch/cHRalASsQu/](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/b7c4CVO5kBi0nRnysJ63jK?domain=fb.watch/)

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/nwfoutdoors/status/1520085246980485121?s=21&t=ErkyMVCudvfkOKHX75jgzA](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/qr_9CW6wlDizLWLqfmuGww?domain=twitter.com)

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**Social media toolkit & graphic for Instagram/Facebook (just copy, paste & share!)**

(tag @NWFoutdoors @MartinHeinrich on Instagram – tag @National Wildlife Federation Outdoors @Senator Martin Heinrich on Facebook).

*⭐️ @NWFoutdoors just released a new #podcast with @SenatorMartinHeinrich 🙌🏼 Listen wherever you get your podcasts!*

*Aaron Kindle and Bill Cooksey sit down with Senator Martin Heinrich of #NewMexico to discuss the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (#Recoverwildlife) - what it is, what it aims to accomplish, and what we need to do to get I passed.*

*Senator Heinrich is the leading sporting advocate in Congress and has worked diligently on numerous pieces of conservation legislation. They cover his perspectives of Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, how it will help state and tribal wildlife agencies, the opportunities to mitigate wildfire and its impacts, and his opinion that Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will be “the most impactful wildlife conservation investment in U.S. history”.*

*After listening, be sure to take Senator Heinrich's advice: "Reach out to your house member and both of your senators. Tell them Recovering America's Wildlife Act is good policy. It's good for our sporting communities. It's good for wildlife. It's bipartisan. Let's get this thing done!"*

*The NWF Outdoors podcast is available everywhere.*

*Find the link to listen and an action alert over at @NWFoutdooors*

*Listen to this episode 👉*[*https://buff.ly/3s3872O*](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/yCJbCXD70ESBPzPKI9v90z?domain=buff.ly)

*Voice your support 👉*[*https://buff.ly/3F0G4Gq*](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/4o4WCYEQnGCkW4Wlu3DnvS?domain=buff.ly)

*#hunting #fishing #wildlife #conservation #wildlifeconservation #publiclands #recoverwildlife*

**Social media guidance for Twitter:**

*New @NWFoutdoors #Podcast with Senator @MartinHeinrich! #RecoveringAmericasWildlifeAct (#RAWA) with #sportsman & lead sponsor, #SenatorHeinrich. What it is, what it aims to accomplish & what our #hunting & #fishing community needs to do to get it passed. Listen👉*[*https://buff.ly/3s3872O*](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/yCJbCXD70ESBPzPKI9v90z?domain=buff.ly)

**3. Run this NEWS ALERT** in your newsletter, on your website, action alert notices, or other places for outreach. Note: there’s a one paragraph version with the ability to link to the longer article.

**Urgent Action: Pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act**

Please join fellow hunters and anglers in urging Congress to pass the bipartisan [Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act) . Our goal is a vote in Congress this summer. This critical legislation invests in proactive, voluntary conservation aimed at conserving wildlife habitat and preventing species from becoming endangered.

Today, more than a third of all North American species are increasingly at risk of extinction, but state wildlife agencies and tribes have a fraction of what’s needed for recovery. The Act will dedicate $1.3 billion annually for state wildlife agencies and $97 million annually for tribes to tackle the growing wildlife crisis. This is our chance to again pass on our precious wildlife legacy to future generations. [ACT NOW.](https://support.nwfactionfund.org/page/27217/action/1?_ga=2.62469292.1095605684.1647359298-1334846324.1647359298)

***Continue Reading (link to more below or run the entirety of the release).***

A century ago, game species we take for granted were imperiled—including elk, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, wood ducks, pronghorn, and striped bass. But thanks to hunters and anglers buying licenses and paying related fees, state wildlife agencies working with partners had the funding to reverse declines and conserve habitats across the country—from duck-filled marshes to blue-ribbon trout streams.

Today, we must scale up and dramatically increase our commitment—as emerging diseases, invasive species, habitat loss, and extreme weather threaten fish and wildlife and their habitats.

State wildlife agencies and tribal nations are ready to hit the ground running with approved action plans to accelerate recovery; restore, repair, and link habitats; and reintroduce species to their former homes. State wildlife action plans cumulatively identify 12,000 species at risk, and include recovery actions for 1,600 species listed as threatened and endangered. Passing the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is critical to prevent species from needing the “emergency room” protection of the Endangered Species Act, and for filling in funding shortfalls for listed species, including the greater sage-grouse, pallid sturgeon, and greenback cutthroat trout.

Habitat investments in forests, grasslands, and wetlands also yield clean water, flood prevention, and carbon capture—providing billions of dollars of services. Our $887 billion outdoor economy depends on thriving wildlife and habitats. A small investment in the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will yield enormous economic benefits.

There’s something else that can’t be given a dollar sign—clouds of snow geese rising from a shallow lake, pronghorn racing a prairie wind, brown bears catching salmon, dolphins leaping from ocean waves, frogs peeping, bees humming, and the dawn chorus of birds.

Our love of wildlife unites us, and our history shows when we take action, wildlife recovers. Please [ACT](https://blog.nwf.org/2019/09/birds-in-crisis-how-one-bill-can-help-our-nations-winged-wonders/) today and spread the word. Let’s pass the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act this summer.

4. **Sample Script** to Call Congress

As a hunter (*or as an angler or both),* I’m urging you to vote YES on the most important bill for wildlife in decades—aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. Please vote for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (HR 2773 and S. 2372). This Act is proactive, voluntary, common sense, job-creating, and based on a model of success sportsmen know well. Today, more than a third of our wildlife species are at increased risk of extinction. By dedicating $1.4 billion annually to state wildlife agencies and tribes, we have the best chance to address the accelerating wildlife crisis—but time is short. **Can I count on you to work to pass this bill immediately? Can I count on your support and vote when the bill comes to the floor?**

5. [**Sign our letter to Congress**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvMgnygWgk_nLeygYJ4tTVpX4bCDpFG_cbbZ_tOPA_JRwUlg/viewform)**.** [1700 groups](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZNDlhIf9fs_g4LaRUauRxfc97UhHGhap/view?usp=sharing) have already signed—help us get to 2000! Hunting and angling groups and businesses include Bass Pro Shops, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Mule Deer Foundation, Izaak Walton League of America, National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, Idaho Hunters Education Association, Michigan Bow Hunters Association, Mississippi Valley Duck Hunters Association, Oregon Hunters Association, and Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Association. (Note: the system takes care of duplicate entries.)

6. **Examples of fish and wildlife that will benefit from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.**

Stories are powerful—showing threats, success, and what’s possible with investment. Feel free to use these overall examples of game species that will receive more attention from the Act. Those are followed by more examples from various states—including some species that aren’t hunted or fished for, but are closely connected to the experience. Feel free to customize.

Each tribal nation and each state wildlife agency developed a wildlife action plan, which identifies imperiled or declining species and lists actions for protection and recovery.

**Regional Examples:**

**American Black Duck:** The American black duck has long been a favorite of hunters along the eastern seaboard, for its wariness and speed. Historically abundant, between the 1950s and ‘80s their population fell by more than half, largely due to the decline in coastal wetlands in the mid-Atlantic. Twenty-three states, from Mississippi to Maine, have identified the black duck as a species of concern in their wildlife action plans. Sixteen states have already begun working together as part of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, which is working to improve 400,000 acres of black duck habitat on public lands and in partnership with private landowners. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would bolster this funding, aiding efforts on behalf of this iconic waterfowl species.

**Eastern Brook Trout:** Brook trout are the only native trout in most eastern states, and they are so highly prized that nine states have declared them the official state fish. Unfortunately, brook trout have been hard-hit by a range of factors including urbanization, agriculture, mining, invasive species, and warming waters. Today, brook trout are found in only 22 percent of their original range. A coalition of 17 states and other partners formed the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture to address this crisis. Funds from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would assist efforts to reconnect habitat, improve water quality, clean up acidic mine damage and restore streamside buffers.

**Mule Deer:** Mule deer are the most abundant big-game animal in the West, important for predators, hunters, and Western states’ economy. In Wyoming, between 1991 and 2012, mule deer numbers dropped by 36 percent. Colorado has experienced an even greater percentage loss. This drop is driven by a variety of factors -- loss of sage grouse habitat due to oil and gas development, urban sprawl blocking migration pathways, and invasive cheatgrass that provides little nutrition for mule deer. Funding from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act could help create mule deer crossings and barbed-fence modifications. Funding could also go to restore sagebrush habitat for sage grouse, which would benefit mule deer alongside pronghorn, elk, and others.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Bighorn sheep are an iconic species once found throughout the American West. In the nineteenth century, their numbers were as high as 2 million. Today, there are fewer than 85,000. The conservation status of bighorn sheep varies across subspecies, with some having gone extinct, two subspecies listed as endangered and other subspecies not listed. Yet all subspecies face the same issues of habitat limitation, blocked migration pathways and catching respiratory disease from domestic sheep. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would help with crucial conservation actions, including state, tribal, and federal agencies working together to take bighorn sheep from one state where they are doing well to replenish populations elsewhere.

**State Examples**

**Bobwhite Quail (Arkansas):** The distinctive whistle of the Northern bobwhite quail could once be heard across Arkansas' farms and fields. While still relatively common, this popular game bird has been declining across its range in recent decades due to habitat loss. With funding from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, Arkansas will be able to take concrete steps to reverse the downward trend in bobwhite numbers and help other vulnerable wildlife.

**Northern Pintail (North Dakota):** Northern pintails depend on wetland and prairie habitats where they eat seeds, worms, snails, grains, and insects. However, loss of these areas from conversion to cropland and wetland drainage has reduced crucial habitat for this species and other wildlife. Although widespread, northern pintails have substantially declined since the 1950s. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would help support conservation actions to protect key habitats and fund continued research on the northern pintail to help ensure this duck remains part of America’s natural heritage.

**Moose (Maine):** A cherished species of the Maine woods, moose are the official state animal and culturally significant to native tribes. While previously imperiled by unrestricted hunting and habitat loss, conservation actions led to the recovery of Maine moose populations from 2,000 individuals in the early 1900s to approximately 64,000 in 2019—the largest population in the contiguous states. However, diseases and parasites are spreading due to milder winters. Moose are especially threatened by winter ticks, which cause life-threatening blood loss, reduced reproductive rates, and lower survival of their young. Funding from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support crucial conservation efforts to protect Maine’s moose population.

**River Otter (North Dakota):** Once considered common on many rivers of the northern Great Plains, the NorthAmerican river otter experienced dramatic declines in the 19th and 20th centuriesfrom unregulated trapping and loss of habitat. River otters continue to struggle with habitatloss, reduced prey populations, and vehicle collisions. In 2012, the South Dakota Department of Fish and Game created a river otter management plan to help address these threats. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would fund critical conservation action for the river otteroutlined in that plan along with information sharing to reduce incidental mortalityfrom beaver traps, and support broader population monitoring to track river otter expansion.

**Pallid Sturgeon** **(Mississippi):** The pallid sturgeon, a species that has existed since the days of dinosaurs, was listed as federally endangered in 1990 due to habitat loss and fragmentation along the Missouri and Mississippi River basins. Man-made alterations to rivers harm the pallid sturgeon’s movements, reproduction, and food sources. Funding from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support crucial conservation actions, including research, habitat improvement, and artificial propagation, to help ensure these fish remain part of America’s natural heritage.

**Lake Sturgeon (New York):** Lake sturgeons can grow up to 7 feet long and weigh over 300 pounds, and date back to the time of the dinosaurs. Historic overfishing, pollution, and barriers to movement from dams resulted in this ancient fish becoming one of the most threatened species in the Great Lakes and a threatened species in New York. The Department of Environmental Conservation relies on artificial propagation and habitat restoration to reestablish populations in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will provide much-needed funding for continuing lake sturgeon restoration and to help ensure this fish remains in New York’s waters.

**Greenback Cutthroat Trout** **(Colorado):** Scientists recently discovered that Bear Creek, in the Arkansas River Basin west of Colorado Springs, contained the only known remaining population of greenback cutthroat trout in the world. Listed first as endangered in 1973 and down listed to threatened in 1978, this trout species has struggled from the impacts of damming and mining. Recent genetic and meristic studies have revolutionized the understanding of cutthroat trout subspecies taxonomy and distribution in Colorado. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support urgent recovery efforts, including establishing additional populations within the trout’s presumed native range and securing protections for the Bear Creek population.

**Pacific Salmon (Alaska):** The largest of all Pacific salmon and the official state fish of Alaska, Chinook salmon make extensive freshwater spawning migrations to reach their home streams. Threats to these fish include overfishing, habitat loss and degradation, and climate change. Funding from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support crucial conservation efforts to protect Alaska’s Chinook salmon.

**Freshwater Mussels (Michigan):** Freshwater mussels are important indicators of water quality, provide habitat for aquatic insects, and are a key link in the food chain. Unfortunately, North American mussels have undergone significant declines over the past century and are sensitive to contaminants in the water. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would help support conservation actions such as state-wide surveys, population restoration efforts, and habitat improvement projects.

**Brook Trout (West Virginia):** West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is working hard to clean up polluted rivers and restore wild brook trout populations to historic streams. Today, the agency has restored over 130 miles of stream where brook trout can now survive, when previously little to no aquatic life was found. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will continue to help wild brook trout and freshwater for drinking and for fisheries.

**Western River Cooter (New Mexico):** The western river cooter is a riverine turtle and is state listed as threatened. Recent research in southeastern New Mexico documented a new country record for this species, with observations significantly further north than had previously been recorded. Funding from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support critical conservation efforts for this species, including habitat protection, research, and education of anglers.

**7. Benefits to Hunters and Anglers from the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act**

1. **More healthy wildlife habitats = more hunting and fishing access:**  Conserving, restoring, repairing, and linking habitats is critical for solving the wildlife crisis and assuring we have healthy fish and wildlife. That in turn will lead to more areas for hunting, fishing, and other forms of outdoor recreation.
2. **Pass on a conservation ethic:** Expect more outdoor education programs in urban *and* rural areas, and field opportunities and jobs to mentor the next generation of conservationists.
3. **Recover game species in trouble:** From American black ducks to wild trout, bighorn sheep, and mule deer, many vulnerable game species will receive more conservation attention from the dedicated funding to state wildlife agencies and tribes.
4. **Help for Freshwater fisheries:** More than 40 percent of freshwater fish species are at risk in North America, including 13 species of trout that occupy less than a quarter of historic habitat. Passing this Act is crucial for the future of fishing and fisheries.
5. **Share the cost of conservation:** The wildlife crisis is a national issue, one that crosses state lines and affects everyone. Hunters and anglers have long paid for conservation with license fees and excise taxes on gear.Toaddress widespread population losses proactively and cost-effectively, the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act will add desperately needed dollars to support state-led and tribal-led conservation.

**8. What is the source of funding for the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act?** The funding source for Senate bill 2372 is civil or criminal penalties, fines, sanctions, and similar federal revenues generated from violations of environmental and natural resources laws and regulations. The key language is that funds available for Recovering America’s Wildlife Act are from “remaining natural resource or environmental-related violation revenue” that “are not directed to be deposited in a fund other than the general fund of the Treasury or have otherwise been appropriated.” The bill text is written so that the source of funding doesn’t touch any existing programs or appropriated funds.

**9.More Resources**

**NWF Outdoors Blog Focused on Hunters & Anglers:**

<http://nwf.org/Outdoors/Blog/08-29-19-Recovering-Americas-Wildlife>

* **General Blogs and Fact Sheets to share with your urgent message that the time is NOW to pass the legislation:**
  + [The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Policy/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act) home page
  + [7 Reasons to Support the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://blog.nwf.org/2021/04/7-reasons-to-support-the-recovering-americas-wildlife-act/)
  + [Fact Sheet: The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/Documents/PDFs/Wildlife-Conservation/Fast-Facts-Wildlife-Crisis_10192017.ashx)
  + [Reintroducing Wildlife: Five Species for Hope](https://blog.nwf.org/2022/01/reintroducing-wildlife-5-species-for-hope-2/)

A larger overall toolkit with additional resources is available: <https://affiliates.nwf.org/resources/recovering-toolkit/>

For more information contact:

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