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Property and Environment Research Center

2048 Analysis Dr Ste A

Bozeman, MT 59718

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am a second-year Agricultural Economics Ph.D. student at Purdue University, specializing in Resources, Environment, and Sustainable Production, with an expected graduation in 2027. My research focuses on environmental justice, policy, climate change, conservation, recreation, and natural capital.

My first year of Ph.D. coursework solidified my foundation in microeconomic theory, statistics, econometrics, and mathematics. Since then, my coursework has focused on my specialty area, environmental economics, while also enhancing my data analysis skills using tools like MATLAB and Mathematica. I am training to become an independent researcher through my work as a research assistant. A significant part of my second year has been dedicated to developing my dissertation research ideas. As our program requires us to complete a prospectus before the third year, much of my time after passing the first-year qualifying exams has been spent working on this. Through this process, I have gained valuable skills that will help shape my future research career.

Learning nonmarket valuation techniques to assess environmental resources is central to my academic training. I’ve applied nonmarket valuation to assess the economic benefits of water quality restoration and wildlife conservation. One memorable project involved using a residential sorting model to estimate the value of water quality improvements in Lake Michigan, which was especially meaningful as I conducted the research while attending Loyola University, located on the shores of Lake Michigan. I am interested in understanding how people value nature, particularly through recreation. I’ve contributed to natural capital accounting research with a paper in which I constructed a time series of nonmarket income generated by recreational fisheries in Lake Michigan. Currently, I’m working on a paper estimating recreational hunting values in Indiana using the contingent valuation method (CVM), collaborating with experts from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and engaging with waterfowl hunters. This work is meaningful to me because I want my research to have real-world impact and value interdisciplinary perspectives.

I’m interested in the PERC fellowship to support my research and growth as an economist. Through the fellowship, I’ll deepen my understanding of nonmarket valuation techniques, particularly by applying CVM to estimate the value of hunting sandhill cranes in Indiana. This research is important for improving methods to assess how people value outdoor recreation and testing CVM’s validity. I use a theoretical model to decompose the effects of changing multiple permit attributes on willingness to pay (WTP) for sandhill crane harvest permits. My findings suggest that there are countervailing impacts of changing bag limits and harvest quotas, which may mask changes in WTP and make the results appear insensitive. I’m excited about this research because it helps advance economic methodology, leading to better estimates in future studies. It’s also important since the IDNR is considering using my findings to inform permit implementation

I hope to use the fellowship to advance my academic career, expand the impact of my research through presentations, and connect with other scholars. It would provide valuable opportunities to learn from different research styles and stay updated on emerging work. This will be especially helpful as I formulate my own research ideas for my dissertation. I appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing my application, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Emma Donnelly

**Reference**: Carson Reeling creeling@purdue.edu (major advisor)