

November 18, 2015

Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

We write to request that you permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (“LWCF”) and provide it with full mandatory funding in one of the bills that Congress must pass before the end of the session. As you know, this critical initiative has been expired since the end of September.

The LWCF is one of the country’s best conservation programs, preserving public lands in rural and urban areas. For the last 50 years, it has protected lands, historic sites, national parks, wilderness areas, and urban parks in every state. LWCF has supported more than 41,000 state and local projects. It is critical to protecting natural resource lands and working forests, providing outdoor recreation opportunities and hunting and fishing access, ensuring wildlife habitat, creating urban parks, and protecting our cultural heritage. Continued investments in this program help our nation’s outdoor recreation, conservation, and preservation businesses, which support millions of American jobs and contribute billions of dollars annually to the economy.

The LWCF is funded with offshore oil royalties and was designed not to use taxpayer dollars. However, since the creation of LWCF in 1965, more than \$18 billion has been taken from the LWCF trust fund and diverted from its original conservation purpose. Because authorization for the LWCF expired on September 30th, offshore oil royalties are no longer being directed into the fund and there is no longer any guarantee that Congress will provide it the necessary funds.

For the economy, sportsmen, veterans, wildlife, and our kids and grandkids, we must permanently reauthorize LWCF – it is America’s most successful conservation program. We also strongly request that you include mandatory full funding in any must-pass year end legislation. We look forward to working with you to resolve this pressing issue.

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