



National Wildlife Federation

Rocky Mountain Regional Center

303 East 17th Avenue, Suite 15 • Denver, CO 80203 • 303-786-8001

August 13, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Chairman Bishop and Ranking Members Cantwell and Grijalva,

The National Wildlife Federation's more than 6 million members and supporters and 51 state and territorial affiliates represent a broad diversity of Americans – hunters, anglers, hikers, bird watchers, paddlers – who cherish the public lands and waters, wildlife, open spaces, trails, wetlands and urban parks that distinguish our country from all others. For more than a half-century, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), through partnerships with state and local governments as well as landowners, has maintained some of our country's most special places, expanded recreation opportunities and protected important fish and wildlife habitat.

Now, LWCF, one of our nation's most important and successful conservation programs, is in danger of expiring. We are counting on your leadership to ensure that doesn't happen. We're calling on Congress to permanently reauthorize and fully fund this program, which is crucial to protecting America's great outdoor and wildlife heritage.

There was widespread, bipartisan support for LWCF when Congress approved it in 1965 to help develop and ensure access to outdoor recreation, preserve important historic sites and sustain wildlife populations. Grassroots support for the program and its goals has only grown in the last 52 years. The fund, at no



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cost to taxpayers, has helped establish playgrounds, neighborhood parks and hiking trails.

From coast to coast, LWCF has helped expand access for hunters and anglers, acquired important fish and wildlife habitat and protected historic battle fields. All 50 states have benefitted. Members and supporters of the National Wildlife Federation and its affiliates hike, camp, fish, watch wildlife and spend time with families and friends in wildlife refuges, national forests and state and local parks that have used LWCF funding.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is an important component of the rapidly expanding outdoor recreation economy, which the Outdoor Industry Association pegs at \$887 billion a year. Many of the 7.6 million jobs directly attributable to outdoor recreation are in rural communities and gateway areas to national parks, monuments and forests.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of America's most effective conservation and recreation programs. It taps a small portion of revenue produced by extracting public, nonrenewable resources – offshore oil and gas – to conserve and expand public access to important natural resources that can, with responsible stewardship, enrich our lives for generations to come.

Congress should permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund and commit to fully funding it. Congress has chronically failed to appropriate the full \$900 million authorized, resulting in more than \$20 billion being diverted elsewhere.

Through your leadership, we can get back on track and help towns, cities and states across the country not only build and maintain trails and parks but protect water supplies, maintain open spaces in rural areas and habitat for fish and wildlife under pressure from increasing urbanization, droughts and wildfires. Without your action, LWCF will run out at the end of September. Our outdoor legacy, sporting and recreation traditions, national history and much more that is fundamentally American are at stake.

Sincerely,

National Wildlife Federation

Hispanics Enjoying Camping Hiking
Outdoors (HECHO)

Montana Wildlife Federation

Arizona Wildlife Federation

Texas Conservation Alliance

New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Florida Wildlife Federation

Conservation Northwest (Washington)



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Artemis Sportswomen	Minnesota Conservation Federation
Wyoming Wildlife Federation	Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
PennFuture	Colorado Wildlife Federation
Georgia Wildlife Federation	Vermont Natural Resources Council
Kansas Wildlife Federation	New Jersey Audubon
Connecticut Forest & Park Association	Tennessee Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Federation	Idaho Wildlife Federation
Environmental League of Massachusetts	Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña Inc.
Louisiana Wildlife Federation	Nuestra Tierra
Virgin Islands Conservation Society	Arkansas Wildlife Federation
Conservation Federation of Missouri	Mississippi Wildlife Federation
South Carolina Wildlife Federation	Environment Council of Rhode Island
Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma	Nevada Wildlife Federation
Wildlife & Habitat Improvement of Nevada	California Planning and Conservation League
New Hampshire Audubon	Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Trout Unlimited Chapter 420	Indiana Wildlife Federation
North Carolina Wildlife Federation	Audubon Society of Rhode Island
North Dakota Wildlife Federation	Alabama Wildlife Federation
Cache River National Wildlife Refuge	Friends of the White River National Wildlife Refuge
West Virginia Rivers Coalition	Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society
Arkansas Watertrails Partnership	Westark Wildlife Conservation Club
Orleans Audubon Society	

Cc: Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior; Sonny Perdue, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture