



LWCFCoalition.org

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CONTACT: Justin Bartolomeo

(202) 400-0480

jbartolomeo@hdmk.org

Senate Interior Appropriations Bill Fully Funds LWCF as Administration Flouts Great American Outdoors Act

WASHINGTON – After hailing passage of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) this summer as a major victory for conservation, the Trump Administration has missed the mark in implementing the new law, submitting LWCF allocations and project lists to Congress that disregard key aspects of GAOA and of the Dingell Act, which permanently reauthorized LWCF just last year. Fortunately and in stark contrast, the chairman of a key Senate subcommittee today released a version of the FY21 Interior Appropriations bill with a spending plan for LWCF more consistent with both the letter and spirit of the law.

“The Administration has utterly blown its shot at implementing this historic conservation and recreation law, whiffing on three separate chances to get this right,” said Drew McConville, Senior Managing Director of Government Relations at The Wilderness Society and a spokesperson for the LWCF Coalition. “First, they missed the deadline. Second, they sent up project lists that have nowhere near the level of detail required. And third, their submission dramatically short-sheets federal land conservation and recreation. After three strikes, they should head back to the dugout while Congress steps up to finish the job right.

“At the same time, we are pleased that the Senate is on a path to join the House in honoring both the intent and the specific terms of the newly passed bipartisan GAOA bill. And while we respectfully disagree with certain aspects of this proposal, including the bill’s proposed rescission of previous-year LWCF funds – which we believe should remain in the program to help address the tremendous backlog of unmet LWCF need – the Senate draft is a welcome step forward in the process.”

The draft released today by Senate Interior Appropriations Chairman Lisa Murkowski comes closer to honoring the LWCF formula required by last year’s reauthorization legislation while providing GAOA’s long-awaited full LWCF funding. That formula requires that a minimum of 40 percent of all LWCF funds be committed to urgent needs in America’s National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and other treasured federal public lands, with that same required threshold for critical state and local grant programs under LWCF. The draft comes close to meeting that standard, though it falls short when all eligible deposits to LWCF (including those from GOMESA) are factored in. The House bill does meet that standard.

As the Senate and House appropriations committees prepare to determine final LWCF allocations in upcoming conference negotiations, the LWCF Coalition appreciates their efforts to follow the direction of GAOA and the Dingell Act – unlike the ill-considered proposal from the Administration – and looks forward to working with our many bipartisan Congressional champions to strike the balances and realize the on-the-ground results those landmark laws envision.

About the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America's most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For 55 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, recreational construction and activities and the continued historic preservation of our nation's iconic landmarks from coast-to-coast.

LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments. Outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation activities contribute more than \$778 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 5.2 million jobs.

About the LWCF Coalition

The LWCF Coalition is the umbrella group of more than 1,000 state and local land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, outdoor recreationists and conservation organizations working to protect America's public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Coalition is united in its advocacy for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which will ensure the continued conservation of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, civil war battlefields, as well as state and local parks. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.