



LWCFCoalition.org

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Senators Cantwell and Burr Introduce Legislation to Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Bipartisan Bill Would Make LWCF Permanent

WASHINGTON, DC – A bipartisan group of Senators, led by Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Richard Burr (R-N.C.), today introduced legislation to fully fund and permanently authorize America’s most important conservation and recreation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The bill, the “Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act” ensures that the \$900 million deposited into LWCF each year is used for its authorized conservation purposes, and extends the program’s authorization into the future.

Original co-sponsors of the bill include Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Robert Casey (D-Pa.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Joe Manchin (D-W.V.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition deeply appreciates the conservation leadership of Senators Maria Cantwell and Richard Burr. The ‘Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act’ reaffirms our nation’s solemn obligation to protect and strengthen America’s most treasured outdoor places,” said Tom Cors, the Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a leading member of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition. “It also provides consistent and predictable funding for states and local communities to make investments that boost tourism and increase the outdoor recreation economy.”

The Cantwell-Burr bill will ensure that LWCF conserves parks, water, open spaces and wildlife habitat while guaranteeing access to America’s public lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. As important, the legislation will stop LWCF’s funding from being diverted for unrelated spending. Over the program’s 50-year history, more than \$20 billion intended for LWCF has been siphoned off for non-conservation purposes and is unaccounted for. Honest budgeting at

the program's authorized level will finally allow LWCF to fulfill its promise to the American people.

“Without spending a dime of our tax dollars, LWCF boosts water quality, supports agriculture and forestry on private lands, provides habitat for fish and wildlife, access to public lands for hunting and fishing, and improves the overall quality of life of all Americans,” said Cors. “Senator Cantwell, Senator Burr and their colleagues should be commended for their commitment to America's most important conservation program, which has done so much to enhance and protect the wonders of the great outdoors during its more than 50 year history.”

LWCF is overwhelmingly popular with the American people and has maintained broad bipartisan support over its half century history of successful, locally-driven conservation. Last year, a supermajority of 85 Senators voted to permanently secure LWCF for every future generation. It was the first vote in history by either the House or the Senate to make the landmark conservation law permanent. In September of 2015, Congress temporarily allowed the program's authorization to expire. It was reauthorized for three additional years at the end of 2015. The Cantwell-Burr bill will make LWCF permanent.

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 50 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 a trillion dollars annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 9.4 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 the reauthorization and 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