

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

We are writing to express our support for strengthening the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), our nation's most important conservation and recreation program. LWCF supports an array of benefits, from protecting drinking water and conserving natural infrastructure, to providing landscape conservation, habitat protection, and outdoor recreation access for all. The program and its many benefits are critical to preserving America's most treasured landscapes for future generations. However, LWCF needs increased investment in Fiscal Year 2025 to address all the outstanding conservation and recreation priorities across the country.

This year, the Administration submitted nearly \$1.1 billion in LWCF needs in its budget request (including \$192 million on the ready-to-go supplemental project lists), and hundreds of millions more were identified during the budget process but left off the final submission lists. Overall demand for LWCF is even higher, with many projects on the priority lists representing single phases of much larger projects. Such demand is persistent over time, with similar supplemental project lists submitted in the last several years. We must continue moving forward to meet the nation's ever-growing need for conservation and recreation access investments. To avoid losing irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, we urge that the FY25 Interior Appropriations bill include \$450 million in discretionary funding, to complement the mandatory allocations provided by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA).

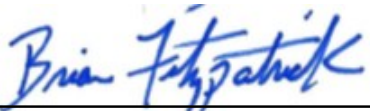
LWCF's \$900 million level was authorized in 1978, when the purchasing power of that amount was more than four times what it is today. Since that time, chronic underfunding of LWCF created a backlog of unmet conservation and recreation needs and a long line of willing-seller landowners and community stakeholders clamoring for access to these funds. GAOA's dedicated funding can begin to address these critical needs; and to more fully address urgent conservation priorities and inequities, additional targeted investment is needed from the unobligated balances of the LWCF Special Account.

Now is the time for America to make significant progress towards its conservation goals and to avoid loss of sensitive lands and waters. We urge you to consider an investment of \$450 million in discretionary funds, in addition to mandatory LWCF funding with no rescissions, be part of

the House FY25 Interior Appropriations bill to address the numerous ready-to-go project opportunities. To maintain the strength of the land management agencies and the integrity of their overall work, we ask that these additional LWCF funds be provided to augment the budgets of these agencies, and not to supplant other necessary operating spending.

Thank you for your attention to this important program. We look forward to working with you to grow investment in conservation and recreation across the nation.

Sincerely,



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



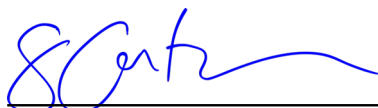
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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress