

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

Sixty years ago, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1964 established America's most successful conservation program. This landmark law was designed to assure our growing population that outdoor recreation lands would be secured, on a pay-as-you-go basis, for future Americans' requirements. We are thrilled that Congress voted overwhelmingly to pass two major bills making LWCF permanent with the Dingell Act of 2019 and the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) of 2020. The two acts secured permanent reauthorization and full permanent funding, respectively, making a definitive statement in support of LWCF as a uniquely constructed, common-sense concept of dedicating the proceeds from public resource extraction for the protection of our greatest natural parks and outdoor places.

Since Congress has resoundingly affirmed its commitment to LWCF as originally intended by protecting the program's annual \$900 million deposits for the long-term and ensuring the direction of those funds to their intended conservation and recreation purposes, we look forward to working on a bipartisan basis toward efficient implementation and strong continuing oversight of our nation's most important conservation and recreation program. GAOA reinforced the critical decision-making role of Congress in determining LWCF funding for its multiple authorized federal agency programs and state grant programs through the annual appropriations process. With the passage of GAOA, Congress finally and permanently ended the history of underfunding, which had limited LWCF from the outset, and provided a solid floor for future investment in conservation and recreation. We particularly want to thank both Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree for your longstanding leadership in these efforts.

We urge that in the FY 2026 bill you recognize the resounding level of support for LWCF, and the backlog of compelling now-or-never conservation and recreation needs in communities across America by investing the increased resources needed to successfully implement this valuable, time-tested program.

We thank the Subcommittee for its vital work in FY25 to produce a bill with strong project oversight and balanced allocations among LWCF subprograms according to the formula set down by the Dingell Act: at least 40% for federal agency conservation and recreation priorities (USFS, BLM, USFWS, NPS), at least 40% for the suite of LWCF state and local grant programs (State and Local Assistance Program, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program, Forest Legacy Program, American Battlefield Protection Program, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants, and Highlands Grant Program), and the remaining 20% allocated among the suite of 10 programs based on need.

We once again request that in FY26 you retain unobligated, prior-year discretionary LWCF funds within appropriate programs rather than allowing them to be rescinded. The programs under the LWCF umbrella are oversubscribed and full funding of LWCF has not eliminated the backlog of time-sensitive conservation and recreation priorities. We appreciate the Subcommittee's past practice of addressing unmet needs by keeping funds in place for viable funded projects within these accounts, and for reinvesting them in LWCF program needs through reprogramming in the event specified project needs have changed. Additionally, with demand continuing to outstrip available LWCF funding, we urge you to take this approach in FY26.

Investments in LWCF support public land conservation and ensure access to the outdoors for all Americans, in rural communities and cities alike. It has created outdoor recreation opportunities in every state and 98 percent of counties across the country, opening key areas for hunting, fishing, and other recreational access; supporting working forests and ranches; acquiring inholdings and protecting critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Civil War battlefields, and other federal areas.

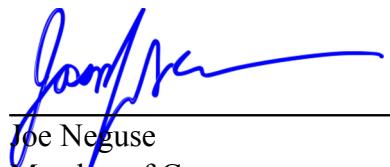
LWCF is essential to America's outdoor recreation economy, which contributes \$1.1 *trillion* to the nation's economy each year and supports 5 million American jobs (more than utilities or construction). Support for public lands among the American public remains consistently and overwhelmingly strong.

We look forward to working with you and other members of the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in the coming months to ensure that the suite of LWCF programs receive the high priority they need in FY26 to maintain our commitment to conservation and recreation, as well as to states and local communities. We urge you to provide balanced allocations for LWCF in FY26, retain unobligated funds with LWCF programs, and include the full project priority lists in the Subcommittee report accompanying the bill. As our nation continues to see rapid loss of natural areas to development, and unprecedented use of parks, trails and other outdoor spaces during the pandemic, the need for increased investment in equitable access to the outdoors, natural infrastructure, and resilient landscapes to support both people and wildlife has never been more urgent.

Sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, House
Natural Resources Committee



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici

Suzanne Bonamici

Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch

Member of Congress

Dina Titus

Dina Titus

Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes

Jahana Hayes

Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids

Sharice L. Davids

Member of Congress

Lucy McBath

Lucy McBath

Member of Congress

Brittany Pettersen

Brittany Pettersen

Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier

Mark DeSaulnier

Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell

Eric Swalwell

Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke

Member of Congress

Doris Matsui

Doris Matsui

Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib

Rashida Tlaib

Member of Congress

Nikema Williams

Nikema Williams

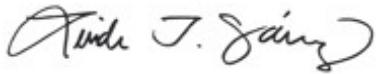
Member of Congress



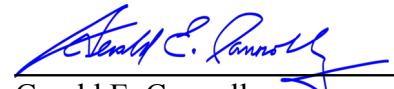
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



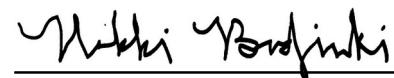
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



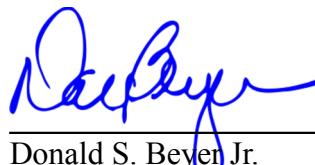
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



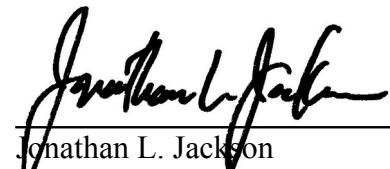
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Summer L. Lee

Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress

Jim Costa

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Andrea Salinas

Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



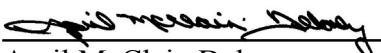
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



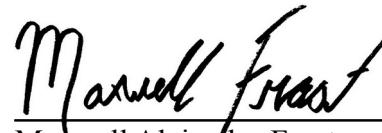
David Scott
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Josh Riley
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress

Claudia Tenney

Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress

Maxine Dexter

Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress

John W. Mannion

John W. Mannion
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Jared F. Golden

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Sarah Elfreth

Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Becca Balint

Becca Balint
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley

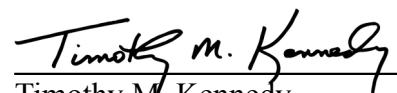
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



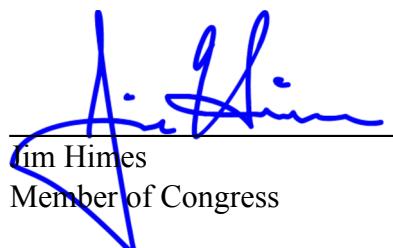
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



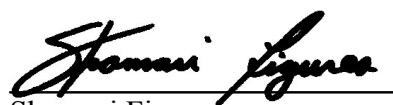
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress

Julie Johnson

Julie Johnson
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Dave Min

Dave Min
Member of Congress

Morgan McGarvey

Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Judy Chu

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jared Moskowitz

Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Nellie Pou

Nellie Pou
Member of Congress

Bradley Scott Schneider

Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Laura A. Gillen
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



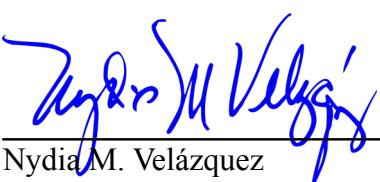
Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



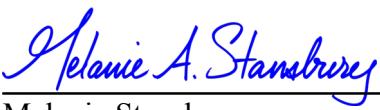
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



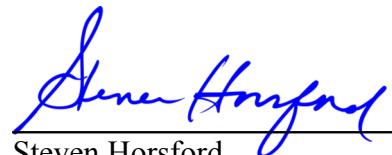
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



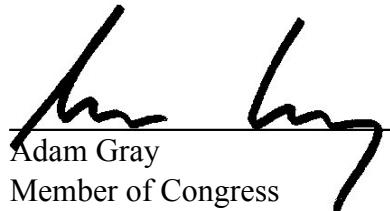
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth
Congressional District



Adam Gray
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



George Latimer
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



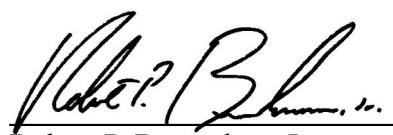
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



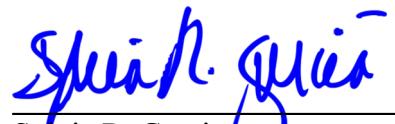
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Robert P. Bresnahan, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Ryan Mackenzie
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress