

# 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.

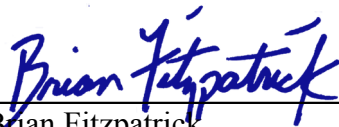
We look forward to working with you and other members of the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in the coming months to ensure that the suite of LWCF programs receive the high priority they need in FY26 to maintain our commitment to conservation and recreation, as well as to 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,



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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



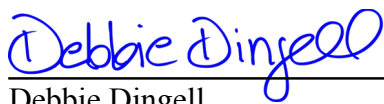
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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Jefferson Van Drew  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



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



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Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress



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Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress



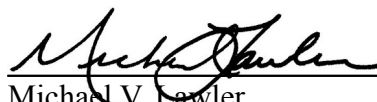
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Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress



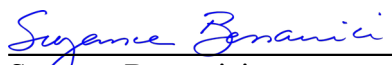
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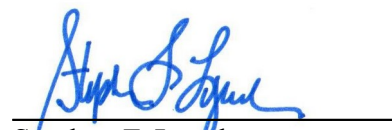
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress




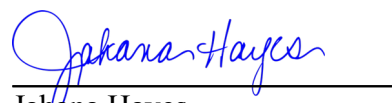
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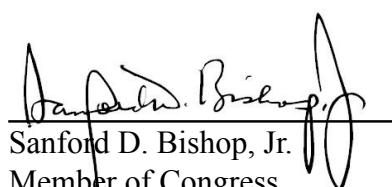
Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress

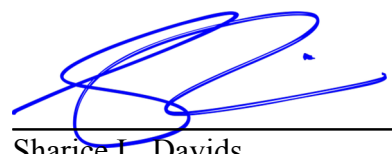
  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

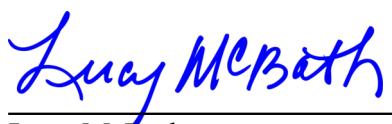
  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

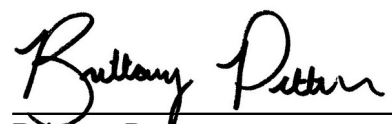
  
Dina Titus  
Member of Congress


  
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress


  
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

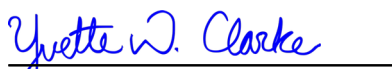
  
Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress

  
Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress


  
Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress

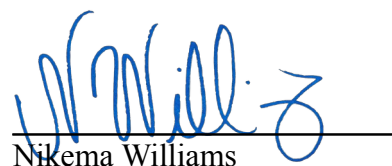
  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

  
Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

  
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

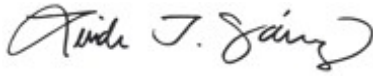
  
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



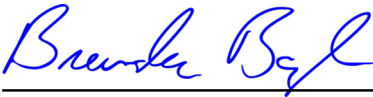
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



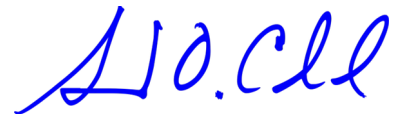
Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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



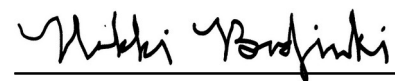
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



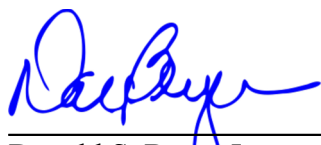
Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



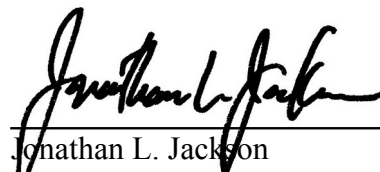
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Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



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Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress



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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



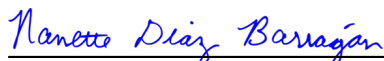
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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



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Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



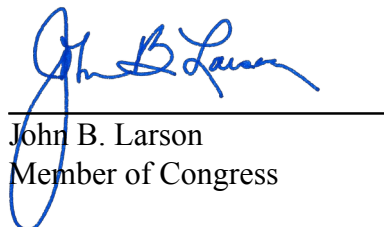
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Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress



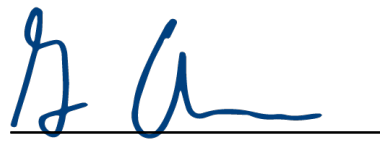
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



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Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



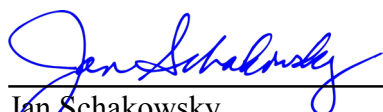
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Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



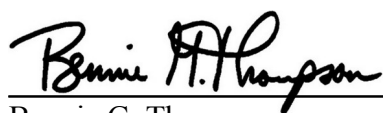
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Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress



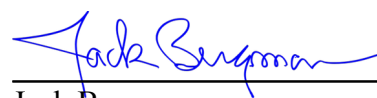
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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



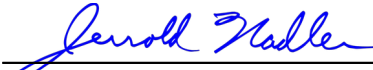
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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress



Terrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



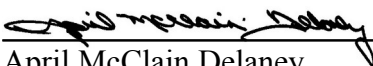
Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress




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



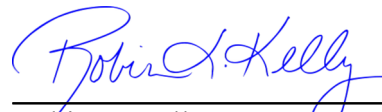
Josh Riley  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



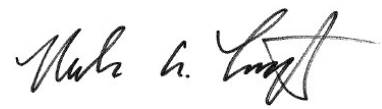
Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

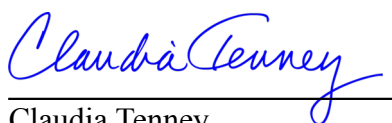


Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



Nicholas A. Langworthy  
Member of Congress





Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter  
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion  
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



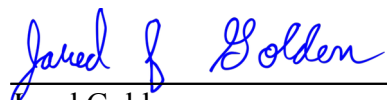
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



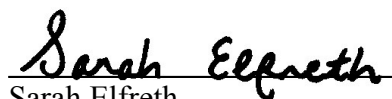
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



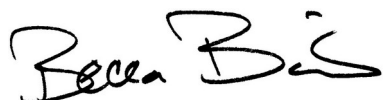
Jared Golden  
Member of Congress



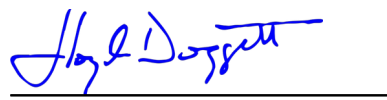
Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



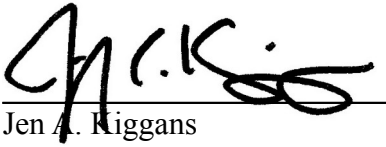
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Jen A. Riggans  
Member of Congress



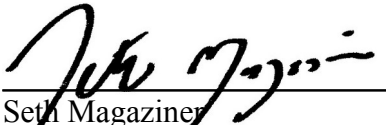
Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



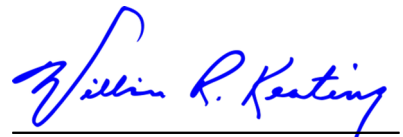
Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



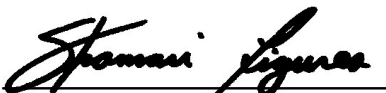
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



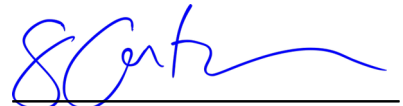
Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



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  
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



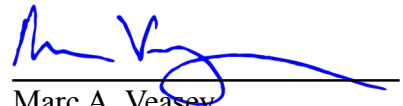
Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



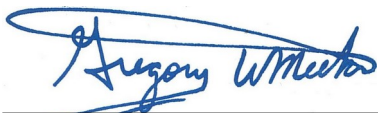
Dave Min  
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



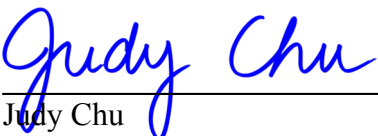
Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



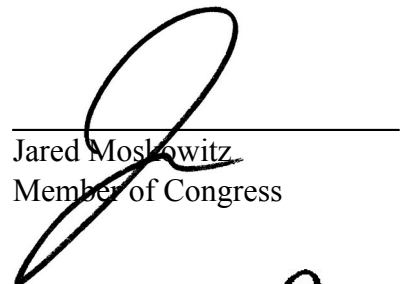
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



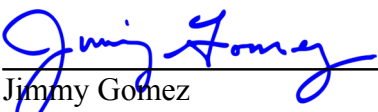
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



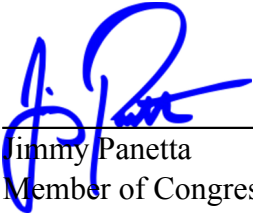
Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Al Green  
Member of Congress



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Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



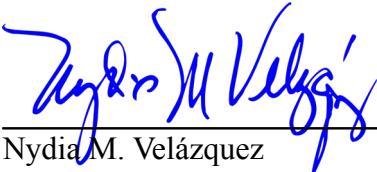
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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



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Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



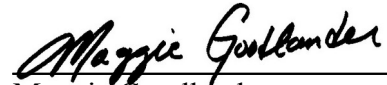
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Laura A. Gillen  
Member of Congress



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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



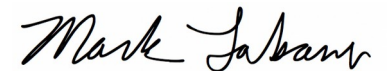
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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



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MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



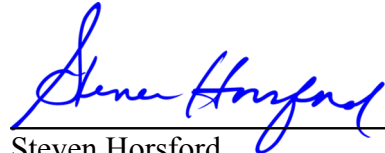
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



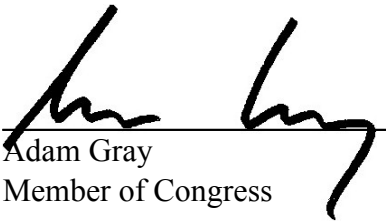
Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress  
Nevada's Fourth  
Congressional District



Adam Gray  
Member of Congress



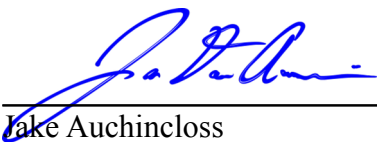
Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



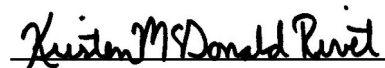
Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



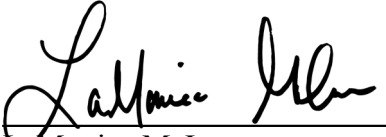
Kristen McDonald Rivet  
Member of Congress



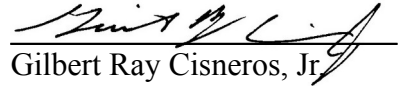
Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



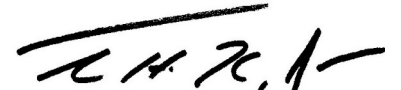
George Latimer  
Member of Congress



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



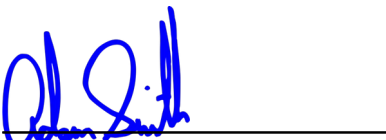
Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Ryan Mackenzie  
Member of Congress



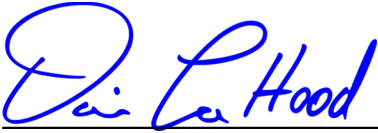
Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



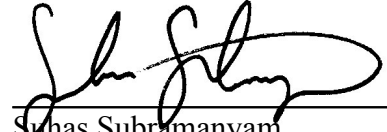
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Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress




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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



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Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



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Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress




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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Luz M. Rivas  
Member of Congress



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Sam T. Liccardo  
Member of Congress