"It's alive!" Patricia Rojas-Ungar and others with Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), wrote in emails on Tuesday afternoon.

After much anticipation, the U.S. Senate passed (92-8) a bipartisan public lands package of 170 bills—the Natural Resources Management Act—in one full sweep. More than 600 pages lay out protections for millions of acres of land, hundreds of miles of rivers, dozens and dozens of varieties of wildlife, and more.

Should the House pass the package, the act will go in front of President Donald Trump to potentially be signed into law. The legislation was assembled in December 2018, but failed to pass in the last Congress before the government went on a historic 35-day hiatus.

“It’s a new year in the U.S. Senate and we finally have a living, breathing and bipartisan public lands package, which will preserve thousands of acres of land for outdoor recreation, permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, help get more kids outside and much more to support our nation’s $887 billion outdoor recreation economy,” Rojas-Ungar, OIA's vice president of government affairs, said in a statement. “We applaud the tireless efforts of many in Congress, the outdoor industry and Americans who value the outdoors for their efforts to move this package across the finish line. While we aren’t there yet, we are close, and urge the House of Representatives to act quickly to pass the public lands package and fund America’s outdoors.”

OIA has created a form for people to send letters to the House in support of passing the act.

BREAKING NEWS: Due to the advocacy efforts of outdoorists across the country and thanks to the leadership of key members of Congress, today the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly approved S. 47, a vast public-lands bill that
permanently reauthorizes the #LWCF: https://outdoorindustry.org/lwcf/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=LWCF ...

Outdoor Industry @OIA

Want to support your public lands and TAKE ACTION? Use our letter-writing tool to reach out to your reps in the House to help get the public lands package across the finish line: https://outdoorindustry.org/support-the-land-water-conservation-fund/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=LWCF ... pic.twitter.com/jmHHwofty1

The package touches every state and includes permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which expired on Sept. 30, 2018, after 52 years of funding projects for America's waterways, national and community parks, and other recreation areas. The LWCF was considered America's premier federal program that reinvested offshore energy revenue into conservation projects.

“The public lands package is a welcomed step towards investing in recreation access and infrastructure, helping this growing sector provide high-quality jobs while supporting rural communities and conserving our treasured places for future generations,” said Jessica Wahl, executive director of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable. "ORR applauds the Senate for coming together in support of our shared lands and waters and the world-class recreation experiences they provide. We look forward to working with our champions in the House of Representatives to bring this legislation across the finish line.”

One bill forbids mining in areas near Yellowstone and North Cascades National Parks, another bill establishes four new monuments, and another bill creates a program for kids and veterans to help restore national parks and other public lands.
In Colorado, Anna Peterson, executive director of The Mountain Pact, wrote: “We are breathing a sigh of relief after today’s bipartisan Senate vote to finally reauthorize LWCF after four months in limbo. Now we need the House to follow suit. Reauthorization is only part of the solution; we really need full funding as soon as possible. Without LWCF funding, our local governments are left in the lurch wondering how to plan our outdoor recreation opportunities which directly impact the health, economic success, and cultural vitality of all mountain communities.”

**Backcountry Hunters & Anglers** President and CEO Land Tawney chimed in. “As sportsmen and women, we understand all too well that success is never guaranteed – and cannot be attained without considerable effort and tenacity,” he said. “We have come together as a community and poured blood, sweat and tears into advancing measures that represent our shared values and our collective vision.”

The anticipation starts all over again as we wait for the House.

BY

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