Over 150 Western Local Elected Officials Urge Congress to Fully Fund LWCF NOW

In March of this year, the bipartisan John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act was signed into law, permanently reauthorizing America's best conservation program, The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) after Congress let it expire in September of 2018. Although reauthorization of the LWCF is an incredible first step, this essential program still needs full funding. In 1964 Congress set the funding level for LWCF at $900 million yet, since then, $22 billion has been funneled to other, unknown and non conservation purposes. It is time that the LWCF receives permanent and full funding.

The LWCF provides grants that contribute to infrastructure developments and conservation measures that protect and enhance national treasures such as our national parks, national forests, monuments, wildlife refuges, and over 40,000 state and local park projects across the country. Without this bipartisan piece of legislation, many of America's most beautiful and highly valued lands that are used for recreation and leisure would have remained unprotected or inaccessible. The LWCF provides financial resources that increase investment opportunities for public access, conservation, ecosystem preservation, and outdoor recreation infrastructure.

Mountain communities in the West are inextricably linked to the public lands that surround them, and without adequate public lands management, their communities face threats to their economic and cultural vitality.

Today, 151 local elected officials from 45 communities covering all 11 Western states, including 19 full councils/commissions signed on to a letter to urge their members of Congress to support full, dedicated Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding.

The House of Representatives has proposed funding the LWCF at $523.9 million and the Senate has introduced S. 1081, the Land and Water Conservation Permanent Funding Act. It is time to continue this momentum toward ensuring full, dedicated LWCF funding.
The LWCF provides the necessary support for our public lands at no cost to taxpayers and directly supports America's $887 billion outdoor recreation economy. This fund is not only important for our Western communities, but also for all Americans. Thank you to the over 150 Western local elected officials who signed on to this letter, released statements, and authored op-eds. Together we can move the needle on public lands funding and management. Stay tuned for further engagement opportunities and funding updates.