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House Votes to Invest in Land and Water Conservation Fund

WASHINGTON – *The following statement can be attributed to Tom Cors, Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesman for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition:*

“We applaud the House for voting to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund as part of the FY19 Interior appropriations bill, and we are hopeful an agreement is reached soon that allows funding to end the government shutdown. This vote of support for America’s most important conservation program is particularly crucial as LWCF remains in limbo following its expiration last year, missing out on \$2.5 million every day for protecting important landscapes and expanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

“Today’s vote is only the first step this Congress must take to save LWCF. Continued uncertainty over LWCF’s future puts the long-term health of communities and landscapes at risk. Legislation to renew LWCF was poised to pass out of Congress by overwhelming margins at the end of last year, but despite the efforts of the program’s many House and Senate champions, the bill died without a vote. This Congress must keep that momentum going and pass bipartisan legislation that provides permanent reauthorization and full, dedicated funding for LWCF.

“Providing more access to public lands for hiking, hunting, fishing, biking and camping is a source of widespread bipartisan agreement. Without spending a dime of our tax dollars, LWCF boosts water quality, provides habitat for fish and wildlife, expands outdoor recreation opportunities and supports local economies.

“We appreciate the commitment this bill makes to LWCF and the communities and local economies that depend on it, and we look forward – alongside LWCF’s dedicated, bipartisan advocates in Congress and across America – to saving America’s most important conservation program.”

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About the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America’s most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, trails, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state

and local level. For more than 50 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, access to recreation including hunting and fishing, and the continued historic preservation of our nation's iconic landmarks from coast-to-coast.

LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments. Outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation activities contribute more than \$887 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 7.6 million jobs.

About the LWCF Coalition

The LWCF Coalition is comprised of more than 1,000 state and regional conservation and recreation organizations of all sizes, land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, the outdoor recreation industry and conservationists working together to protect America's public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Coalition is united in its advocacy for the permanent reauthorization and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which will ensure the continued conservation of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, civil war battlefields, working lands and state and local parks. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that LWCF funds have protected, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.