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Senate Votes to Permanently Reauthorize America's Most Important Conservation Program

LWCF Coalition Urges House Vote Immediately; Calls for Full Dedicated Funding

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate today voted to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as part of a public lands package introduced by Senators Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska and Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. The LWCF Coalition, along with millions of Americans and organizations from across the country, are united in our push to see this historic legislation signed into law and urges the U.S. House of Representatives to act on it immediately.

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 Senate for voting to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund as part of the public lands package introduced by Senators Murkowski and Cantwell. This is a tremendous bipartisan victory for protecting our public lands, and we urge the House to follow the Senate’s lead and the will of millions of Americans and permanently reauthorize LWCF.

“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 a day for protecting important landscapes and expanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

“For too long, LWCF funds have been siphoned off for non-conservation government spending. That is why it is critical for Congress to build on this success and provide full and dedicated funding for LWCF. The outdoor recreation industry, governors, mayors, sportsmen, small business owners, conservation leaders, landowners, ranchers, and millions of Americans will continue to push Congress to finish the job and get LWCF the funding it deserves.”

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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.