



**LWCFCoalition.com**

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## **Bipartisan Legislation Ensures Funding for America's Most Important Conservation and Recreation Program**

**Full and dedicated funding necessary to end raiding of LWCF account**

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of senators today introduced legislation to dedicate full and continuing funding for America's most important conservation and recreation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Recent passage of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act (Dingell Act) permanently reauthorized LWCF after a lengthy effort in Congress. On the heels of this major victory, today's bill introduction continues a bipartisan commitment to LWCF to ensure that the program receives full and dedicated funding each year.

The bill, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act, was introduced by Sens. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Cory Gardner (R-Colo.). Joining them as original cosponsors are Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Richard Burr (R-NC), who authored a similar bill that was approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee last Congress. Other co-sponsors include Sens. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Angus King (I-Maine), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tom Udall (D-NM), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Lindsay Graham (R-SC) and Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.).

The legislation builds off the successful permanent reauthorization of LWCF in the Dingell Act by ensuring that funds already being deposited into the LWCF account in the U.S. Treasury for LWCF – \$900 million annually – are invested only in the conservation of our country's natural, cultural and historic treasures.

LWCF rarely gets funded at its authorized amount and often its funds are diverted for other purposes. Since the program was created in 1964, LWCF has received its authorized funding level just twice. Over the program's 50-year history, about \$22 billion intended for LWCF has been siphoned off from the fund for non-conservation purposes.

"Every dollar diverted from LWCF leaves local communities with fewer resources to make investments that boost tourism and create jobs," said Tom Cors, director of government relations

for lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesman for the LWCF Coalition. “After the historic vote to permanently authorize LWCF, it’s time to keep the promise made to the American people more than 50 years ago: That government revenues from offshore drilling are used to preserve and protect our greatest outdoor places. We thank the sponsors of this important legislation for their work to meet this commitment to America’s communities, economy, and special landscapes.”

LWCF is overwhelmingly popular with the American people and has maintained broad bipartisan support over its long history of successful, locally driven conservation. Recently, the U.S. Senate voted to permanently authorize LWCF by a vote of 92 to 8 and the House of Representatives by a vote of 363 to 62. But immediately thereafter, the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2020 budget recommended a 105 percent cut to LWCF, proposing to claw back funding from previous years, preventing access to recreation in every state and county in America – and demonstrating the urgent need for this legislation.

“LWCF is a common-sense, fiscally responsible way to ensure that our public lands are protected for years to come,” added Cors. “At no cost to taxpayers, LWCF boosts water quality, supports agriculture and forestry on private lands, provides habitat for fish and wildlife, access to public lands for hunting and fishing, and improves the overall quality of life for communities across the country. We will work tirelessly to prevent the cuts to LWCF proposed in FY 2020, and to protect it for the long-term by passing this legislation to dedicate LWCF’s funding for future generations.

“From backyards to the backcountry, LWCF provides access to America’s public lands for all Americans,” said Cors. “The LWCF Coalition looks forward to working with the program’s many champions in Congress to build on the bipartisan cooperation that made permanent reauthorization a reality and ensure that LWCF receives the full and dedicated funding it deserves, to save America’s best places.”

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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, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For 50 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, recreational construction and activities 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 the umbrella group of more than 1,000 state and local land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, outdoor recreationists and conservation organizations working to protect America’s public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Coalition is united in its advocacy for the 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, as well as state and local parks.

For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit [www.lwcfcoalition.com](http://www.lwcfcoalition.com)