



September 17, 2018

Re: Reauthorization and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Dear members of the California Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of tens of thousands of sportsmen and women in California, we are writing to urge you to pass a bill that will permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) before its expiration on September 30 of this year.

We appreciate that many of you have co-sponsored or otherwise supported legislative efforts to accomplish this goal. But we are down to the eleventh hour and request that you prioritize this action, which has strong bi-partisan support both in Congress and among the American public.

One of the things that makes America unique from almost any other country is our system of public lands. Especially in the western U.S., these public lands harbor virtually all of the best habitats for coldwater fish and game species, and provide most of the fishing and hunting opportunities we enjoy. There would be limited or no public access to many of these lands, however, if not for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In fact, since 1964 the LWCF has been vital in providing or enhancing sporting access and conserving habitat on public lands across the nation. Yet this worthy program, which requires no taxpayer dollars, will sunset at the end of this month unless Congress acts.

In California alone, LWCF has provided nearly \$170 million in funding and enabled over 900 projects that improve public access and opportunity for outdoor recreation. These projects have conserved open space and habitat and improved access for outdoor recreation through such infrastructure as boat ramps, trails, campgrounds, parking areas, equestrian facilities and fish cleaning stations.

Few government programs, if any, have done as much for anglers and hunters as the Land and Water Conservation Fund. A few examples of LWCF-funded projects in California that directly benefit anglers and hunters include: improved fishing access to Lake Edson and conservation of the designated Wild Trout fishery of the Rubicon River (Eldorado County); expansion of the Coon Hollow Wildlife Area and improved fishing access to Oroville Pond (Butte County); expansion of and improved public access to the Mendota Wildlife Area (Fresno County); improved public access to Crowley Lake (Inyo County); development at the Redondo Beach fishing pier (Los Angeles County); expansion and conservation of the Green Creek Wildlife Area (Mono County); improved public access to the Truckee River (Nevada County); and improved

fishing access to the Klamath River and expansion of the Horseshoe Ranch Wildlife Area (Siskiyou County).

Of particular benefit to sportsmen and women, LWCF funding is sometimes utilized to swap or acquire private properties surrounded by public land. The conversion of such inholdings to public land helps reduce fragmentation of habitat and often improves public access for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. Working with local communities and willing sellers, these LWCF-funded strategic land exchanges and acquisitions have significantly improved conservation efforts and recreational access in many areas.

As you know, there is an ongoing, bi-partisan effort in Congress to permanently reauthorize the LWCF. Yet, despite diverse support from all corners of the country and many lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, Congress has sidestepped several opportunities to pass legislation to achieve this outcome.

There is no sporting opportunity without high quality habitat. Few government programs, at any level, have been as successful and important in conserving habitat and enhancing public access as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, utilizing zero taxpayer dollars. We respectfully request that you pursue every opportunity to re-authorize and fully fund the LWCF prior to the program's expiration on September 30.

Sincerely,

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Cc:

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The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
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The Honorable Maria Cantwell
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