

August 18, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Chairwoman Murkowski, and Ranking Member Cantwell,

We're writing to let you know about the positive impact the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has had on communities across New Mexico and urge you to save this important program and ensure it is fully funded.

Unfortunately, without Congressional action before September 30, this important program which has invested more than \$261 million in New Mexico, will sunset.

Since its creation by Congress in 1965, LWCF has benefitted New Mexico's communities and residents through both its "state-side" and "federal-side" programs. The federal side program has allowed for the acquisition of important lands within our national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, and forests, including critical areas within Petroglyph and Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monuments; Valles Caldera National Preserve, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Orilla Verde Recreation Area; and the Gila National Forest.

In addition to valuing the areas secured for the public enjoyment on our shared national public lands in New Mexico, LWCF's grants made to local governments and the State are also crucially important.

Since 1965, more than 1,000 grants—spread among every New Mexico county and totaling nearly \$41 million—have been made through LWCF's state-side program. These grants have been matched with state and local funds to plan, construct, and enhance parks, playgrounds, trails, ball fields, pools, and other recreation facilities in communities across the state.

Not only is LWCF actively preserving places for all our citizens to enjoy, but it is also creating thousands of jobs in construction, outdoor recreation and tourism.

LWCF is authorized to receive about \$900 million annually in federal revenues from offshore oil and gas leasing. Which means the fund does not cost taxpayers a dime. It's a great deal for New Mexicans and all Americans.

Sadly, only twice in the last 50 years has the fund been fully used for the purpose of conservation and park building.

That's why, in addition to saving the LWCF from expiration, we are also asking for your support in ensuring it gets fully funded moving forward.

While we share a New Mexico perspective, LWCF has had positive impacts in all fifty states of our nation. We appreciate your positive efforts to date regarding LWCF – especially including LWCF reauthorization in the recently introduced Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 – and hope you'll do everything you can to ensure this program's reauthorization and full funding.

Sincerely,

Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales

Representative Deborah A. Armstrong  
Representative Bealquin Bill Gomez  
Representative Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales  
Representative Patricia Lundstrom  
Representative Javier Martinez  
Representative Bill McCamley  
Representative Matthew McQueen  
Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Representative Andres Romero  
Representative Patricio Ruiloba  
Representative Tomás Salazar  
Representative Carl Trujillo  
Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard  
Representative Jim Trujillo

Senator Jacob Candelaria  
Senator Carlos Cisneros  
Senator Cisco McSorley  
Senator Bill O'Neill  
Senator Michael Padilla  
Senator Nancy Rodriguez  
Senator William Soules  
Senator Mimi Stewart  
Senator Richard Martinez

CC:

U.S. Senator Tom Udall

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell

White House Council on Environmental Quality Managing Director Christy Goldfuss