



The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H 232 United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

We are writing to express our strong continuing support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) during consideration of any proposals in the House of Representatives regarding the disposition of revenues from energy development in our nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). LWCF represents a promise that was made to the American people almost 50 years ago to take the proceeds from natural resource development in the OCS and invest a small portion of those dollars in conservation and outdoor recreation. It is essential that we honor this fundamental promise by maintaining the connection between depletion of OCS resources and offsetting mitigation through LWCF.

Over the years the House has debated many legislative proposals regarding energy development in the OCS and the use of revenues from that development to fund a variety of needs.

Throughout this debate, however, Congress's half-century commitment to LWCF has always remained constant. LWCF is an incredibly successful bipartisan program that, in its nearly five decades of existence, has touched all fifty states and nearly every county in America. It is based on an unassailable logic: when the federal government sells the finite OCS resources we all own, it should reinvest at least a portion of the proceeds into the dwindling irreplaceable open spaces and recreational opportunities we all need.

In these difficult times, the need to stimulate our economy, create jobs and shore up our infrastructure is considerable. LWCF makes a substantial contribution to these critical priorities, and any diversion of funds away from LWCF undermines the economic asset that our federal, state and local public lands represent. Hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation activities contribute a total of \$730 billion annually to the economy, supporting 6.5 million jobs (1 of every 20 jobs in the U.S.). When combined with the broader outdoor recreation and historic preservation sectors, this economic contribution rises to \$1.06 trillion annually, supporting 9.4 million jobs. Whether manufacturing, retail or service-related, most of these jobs cannot be exported, with magnified impacts in local and rural communities.

We are well aware that difficult choices must be made in this time of fiscal austerity. As we measure those choices based on their effects on America's people, communities, and economy, the need for sustained investments through LWCF is clear. LWCF is a proven economic driver and has already taken its share of significant cuts in recent years. Over the last two decades,

LWCF funding has represented an average of just 7.14% of total OCS revenues, but this modest investment has produced exceptional returns as it helps to protect wildlife habitat and landscapes, support states and communities that offer close-to-home recreation, and protect working ranches and forests. Additionally, LWCF is critical to providing recreational access for all Americans including hunters and anglers by making public lands public. We therefore urge you to do all you can to maintain this vital commitment to our nation's premier conservation program.

Sincerely,

/s

Chris Murphy
Member of Congress

/s

Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress

/s

Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

/s

Charles F. Bass
Member of Congress

/s

G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

cc: Chairman John Mica
Ranking Member Nick Rahall
Chairman Doc Hastings
Ranking Member Edward Markey
Chairman Mike Simpson
Ranking Member Jim Moran
Chairman Hal Rogers
Ranking Member Norm Dicks