

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2008

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to restore funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state and local grant program to \$125 million for FY 2009.

The LWCF state assistance program provides matching federal grants to states and local communities to develop outdoor recreation facilities, parks, and resources. The need for funding these efforts stretches across the country, as the LWCF program has aided local projects in over 98% of all U.S. counties. It is considered one of the most successful partnership programs in the history of the Department of Interior. According to the National Park Service, the "LWCF grant program has been successful in encouraging States to take greater responsibility for the protection and development of recreation resources at every level."

Between 2002 and 2005, the President requested, and Congress appropriated between \$89 million and \$140 million per year for the LWCF stateside program. In sharp contrast, between 2006 and 2008, funding has averaged \$27 million, and the President's FY09 budget eliminates LWCF funding.

With the program woefully under funded the past three years, the unmet need in every state has escalated. In its 2007 Annual Report on the LWCF state assistance program, the National Park Service reported that states estimated their unmet need for outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition at \$15.6 billion. Additionally, 42 of 50 states meet only 20% or less of their total estimated need for local outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition. Clearly the need for matching federal investment is profound.

Since its inception in 1965, the LWCF program has funded over 41,000 sports fields, recreation facilities, and natural parks, including the purchase and protection of 3 million acres of land and green space. It has proven itself a successful partnership program over its 40 plus year history, but has seen its funding levels diminished as of late.

We strongly urge the Subcommittee to support an appropriation of at least \$125 million in FY 2009 for the LWCF state assistance program.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress

John F. Terry

Jim Moran

Wayne T. Gilchrist

Barry Funk

Rose L. Pelcero

Earl Blumenauer

Ed Cotton

James L. Oberstar

L.B. Fangel

Melanie Waters

~~Gregory A. Meeks~~

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Ben Ray

Jessie Madley

Phil English

Loraleyn B. Miley

Chris Byrd

Barry Gordon

John Smith

Howard Coble

Bill Pascrell Jr.

Tim Peter

Vitell

Tony Baldino

Mike Mastropasqua

Sheila Jackson Lee

Bob Filner

Parlon Huels

Roller

Michael H. Michael
Earl Owen

Eddie Brian Johnson
Carol Shea-Power

Pete Miller
Raul M. Gonzalez

Randy M. Payne
~~He M.~~

Ray A. Wapner
Mark Louder

David P. P.

Peter DeFazio

Samuel J. Markey

John Grant

Betty Satta

Shirley Van Helle
Phil G.

John M. Holt
Ron Kind

Melley Moore Caputo

Leonard E. Young
Edward Shea

George Miller
W.K. Page

Elijah F. Zimmerman

Erin L. Enger

Oak E. Ullmer

Thomas P. Ortiz

John Longenecker

Carl A. Wick

Don O. Matus

Jim Langewiesche

Jan Lehman

Norman Lohman

Spis Coppers

Barbara Culin

Robert Wether

Cheryl Shroyer

Margie K. Hirono

T. V. L.

Jim Mast

Henry C. Boyd

Tim Fort

Rick Larson

Judy Biggert

Jim McDermott

John B. Ramm

Don Allen

Hank Johnson

Sander Levin

John Hall

Bill C.

Vic Snyder

William J. Schuette

Bob Zell

John A. Lobrich

Harvey E. Mitchell

Devin J. Kuyper
Hot Shit

Ben Belknap

Dominic DePette

Clayton Taylor