



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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June 5, 2015

Dear Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

I write to urge your support for swift reauthorization of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). As you know, the LWCF was created by Congress in 1965 as a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources, wildlife, and our cultural heritage and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Now, in 2015, the program is set to expire unless Congress takes action. I urge you to act quickly to reauthorize the program, at funding levels that meet or exceed the currently-authorized levels.

National parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, community parks, trails, and ball fields in every state have received funding from the LWCF. Over its 50 year history in Washington State, the LWCF has invested close to \$600 million in over 600 projects. These investments not only protect our land, water and wildlife – beautiful natural resources that contribute to every Washingtonian's quality of life and our state's identity, but they also support one of our state's most valuable industries: outdoor recreation.

A recent economic analysis completed by the state found that the outdoor recreation industry is an important economic driver in Washington, contributing approximately \$21.6 billion in spending to the state's economy each year. These investments support close to 200,000 jobs and contribute over \$2 billion in local and state tax revenues that help provide essential services for our citizens. The employment figure is particularly important in the state's rural areas, as the majority of these jobs are located in rural and more economically-distressed regions of our state. The LWCF is an essential contributor to the outdoor recreation industry in the state and across the country, by protecting and expanding recreational opportunities at the state, federal and local level.

The LWCF is composed of multiple valuable tools that are all critical for Washington State. Our state's national parks and monuments have received acquisition funds from the federal lands program. In addition, federal agencies partner directly with our state agencies to support state and local wildlife habitat and endangered species conservation projects (Endangered Species Act Section 6 funding), as well as timber land conservation programs (Forest Legacy funding). The LWCF has provided essential support for recovery of several imperiled species. And some of our state's most iconic places and important working lands, such as the Mt. Rainier National Park, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, and thousands of acres of timber lands at the base of Mt. St. Helens, have received permanent protection as a result of the LWCF.

The LWCF State Assistance Program provides matching grants to help states and local communities acquire and develop parks and recreation resources. These investments help communities protect wilderness, maintain trails, develop neighborhood playgrounds, and more. LWCF funding has benefitted nearly every county in Washington. Projects have included numerous trails in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, the Little Spokane River Natural Area, Pietrzycki Park in Columbia County,



Klickitat Prairie Park in Mossyrock, and Kandle Park and Pool in Tacoma. This program, which requires state or local matching investment, is the primary federal investment tool to ensure that people have easy access to parks and open space, hiking and riding trails, and neighborhood recreation facilities.

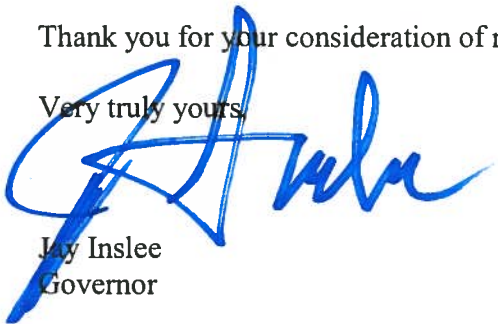
Across the country over the last decade, LWCF investments have been roughly equally divided between federal lands projects and state and local projects, through grants and pass-through programs. I support continued robust investments in both LWCF federal agency-led and state-led programs, both of which provide great benefits to our state.

Fifty years ago, the LWCF was created with bipartisan support to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility of outdoor recreation resources to all citizens of the United States. It was necessary and important in 1965, and it is arguably even more necessary and important now. This federal program aligns with our recent efforts to further promote outdoor recreation opportunities for the people of Washington State and to build upon the outdoor recreation industries already present and thriving here. Reauthorizing the LWCF will allow for continued federal resources to augment our own state investments in outdoor recreation and will help grow our economy and create a better quality of life for our people.

Finally, in addition to the LWCF, prompt reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), before September 30, 2015, is also very important for Washington State. This program was created in 1966, largely through the leadership of the Washington State Congressional Delegation, and it plays an essential role in supporting the preservation of our state's cultural and historic places. The HPF helps preserve the history of the state we love and also promotes economic development and revitalization and tourism. The HPF and LWCF both derive their investment from the same revenue source.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and your ongoing service to our state.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee  
Governor