



# National Recreation and Park Association

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February 6, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Energy & Natural Resources Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Energy & Natural Resources Committee  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: LWCF Reauthorization and State Assistance Program

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Senator Cantwell:

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) followed, with great interest, last week's Senate discussion on the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which occurred during floor debate on the Keystone XL pipeline.

As a result, the NRPA deems important that we clearly state our position in support of changes being needed in the reauthorization of the LWCF.

The NRPA represents over 14,000 state and local park and recreation agencies, as well as more than 48,000 individual members in communities both large and small in all states. We respectfully request your support for: 1) the reauthorization of the LWCF including full, permanent funding; and 2) with fair and equitable treatment for the State Assistance Program of no less than 40% guaranteed funding for formula grants to the states for active outdoor recreation.

What we find is getting lost in the current discussion over the reauthorization of the LWCF is, first and foremost, the issue of fairness in how LWCF dollars are being distributed. While four-out-of-five Americans live in larger metropolitan areas, the LWCF is now only providing about 13% of overall funding to the very program – State Assistance -- which impacts people where they live, and recreate, the most. Urban communities, in particular, suffer from the severe lack of resources currently provided through the State Assistance program.

The State Assistance Program is consistently listed as a key tenant of the overall LWCF program. We value preserving and providing access to our national treasures for all to enjoy, but we want to remind you that many treasured areas are NOT located on federal property.

In spite of its gross lack of support, portions of State Assistance allocations have been administered very successfully to virtually every local community across the country. The respective state and local partners frequently go well beyond the required one-to-one match for stateside grants.

Chairman Murkowski  
Ranking Member Cantwell  
LWCF Reauthorization

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Described as the most effective conservation effort in America and widely recognized as visionary legislation in 1965 when LWCF was authorized, the original allocation designated was:

*SEC. 4. (a) ALLOCATION.—There shall ...*

*(i) the appropriation therein made shall be available in the ratio of 60 per centum for State purposes and 40 per centum for Federal purposes, ...*

[www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg897.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg897.pdf)

Through legislative changes and diversions, the State Assistance portion of the fund in recent years averages 13%. We recognize the considerable competing priorities, but an honest review will confirm the effectiveness, the demand and the appropriateness of providing a fair and balanced allocation that resembles the original intent of the law.

NRPA fully supports permanently and robustly reauthorizing LWCF State Assistance funding to enable planning, acquisition, development and rehabilitation of outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities at the state and local levels.

Permanent reauthorization of LWCF, with a dedicated, balanced and equitable funding of the State Assistance allocation, will have tremendous impact today, and for generations, in meeting the purposes of the original Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Barbara Tulipane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line above the name.

Barbara Tulipane, CAE  
President and CEO  
National Recreation and Park Association

cc: Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee