



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

June 25, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

It was 50 years ago that Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, a remarkable bipartisan measure that provides urban and rural outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans. With your support, the Act will be reauthorized beyond September 2015. We are also asking you to rebalance funding toward the states during this reauthorization.

When Congress passed the LWCF Act in 1965, its primary purpose was to provide close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities for everyone, and it guaranteed that sixty percent (60%) of the Act's funds were to be dedicated to be distributed on a matching basis to states and territories, with forty percent (40%) to go to federal land acquisition. An amendment to the Act eliminated this commitment to the states, while leaving the requirement that a minimum of 40% be used for federal purposes. Since that date, state grant appropriations have been subjected to intense lobbying and now average only 12.5%.

Despite the drop in funding, LWCF grants have improved thousands of communities throughout the commonwealth. Projects range in size from large, high-profile undertakings – like the rehabilitation of the Big Savage Tunnel, a key point along the Great Allegheny Passage trail – to more local initiatives, such as the Mayview land acquisition in Allegheny County, which joined together three local parks.

Tremendous strides have been made in meeting local outdoor recreation needs thanks to the LWCF in Pennsylvania. The fund is still greatly needed to address infrastructure upgrades, meet new health and safety requirements, and respond to changing population trends. Parks

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created through this visionary law provide areas that will forever be available to address the needs of our youth, adults, seniors, and those of all abilities.

I am requesting your support to renew the Act with a restored commitment to an equitable share for state grants. Your commitment is critical to carry forward the visionary legacy of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Sincerely,



TOM WOLF
Governor