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March 24, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

City Parks Alliance, the only independent national organization solely dedicated to urban parks, representing hundreds of public and non-profit park organizations, is writing to express our strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

As you know the LWCF is one of the most successful conservation and recreation programs in the nation and continues to have strong bipartisan support over its 50-year history. The LWCF is funded through revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling royalties, a portion of which is matched by state and local contributions – increasing the return on investment without using federal tax dollars. LWCF has supported more than 42,000 projects in 98% of the nation’s counties. It is a smart and effective use of federal funds for all Americans.

Specifically, we request that the Subcommittee continue to fund State Assistance at the annualized “continuing resolution” level of \$110 million for FY 2017, which would include level funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP) at \$12 million, and maintain this amount of support in FY 2018. The ORLP provides needed grants to disadvantaged communities.

When cities receive LWCF grants, those grants are matched and often leverage millions more in public and private investments. For example, LWCF’s \$1.2 million in grants for the South Platte River in Denver galvanized more than \$2.5 billion in local public and private funding, an investment that has revitalized Denver’s downtown and continues to drive economic development and job creation.

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*Seattle, WA*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Catherine Nagel**  
*Washington, DC*

Greenville, SC transformed its downtown by restoring Reedy River Falls Park, which was originally protected by a \$16,000 LWCF grant. This park has now generated close to \$100 million in private investment in the adjacent area. There are many other examples across the country in cities large and small that show the true economic and health benefits that LWCF grants can have on communities.

Indeed, the bipartisan Mayors for Parks Coalition, managed by City Parks Alliance, brings together mayors from around the country who have seen the success of LWCF-funded projects in their cities and are urging Congress to reauthorize and fully fund LWCF. Co-chairs of the 51-member coalition are Mayor Michael B. Hancock (D) of Denver, CO and Mayor Betsy Price (R) of Fort Worth, TX.

One of the most important but least recognized essentials to an attractive and healthy urban environment is a well-designed and well-maintained network of city parks – a vital component of any city’s infrastructure. Parks support public health, workforce development, local economies, the environment, education, and community cohesion. They are critical to creating resilient, livable, and vibrant cities. LWCF funding is an essential resource for cities as they seek to develop new or revitalize existing urban parks, green spaces, and recreation opportunities.

City Parks Alliance is conscious and respectful of the federal budget challenges. The LWCF has been proven as a smart investment where funds can be leveraged effectively through public private partnerships. We look forward to working with you to provide critical funding to urban communities where this public investment is critically needed and will be following up with a meeting request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Nagel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Nagel  
Executive Director  
City Parks Alliance