

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 29, 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:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) initiative administered by the National Park Service. We respectfully request that the Subcommittee provides level funding at \$12 million in the FY 2018 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. With this funding, the National Park Service would award 20 to 40 grants to support community enhancement, reinvigoration, and protection of close-to-home parks and recreation opportunities in underserved areas. As this program is included as part of the overall funding for the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program, we ask the Subcommittee to ensure that any continued funding for the ORLP does not negatively impact the total amount provided to the critical "formula grants" to the states for conservation and outdoor recreation.

There is a tremendous need for outdoor recreational opportunities in the communities where most Americans live, work, and play. The ORLP, a competitive grant program, complements the traditional formula State Conservation grants program by focusing on national priorities, specifically helping urban communities to acquire or develop land to create or reinvigorate public parks and other outdoor recreation spaces in ways that will encourage people to connect or re-connect with the outdoors. Priority is given to projects that engage and empower underserved communities and youth; provide opportunities for employment or job training; involve and expand public-private partnerships; and rely on a high degree of coordination among all levels of government, to improve recreation opportunities for all. This initiative leverages federal dollars by awarding 50-50 matching grants through a nationally competitive process that allows states to put forward the projects they believe best meet the needs of their communities.

The initial awards for this initiative were announced in April of 2015. Among the projects includes one to develop a playground, a multi-purpose field, a picnic area, pathways connecting to a regional trail network, and an environmentally restored riverfront on a 3.5-acre park on a formal industrial site on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, MN. The remainder of the grants were awarded to Mobile, AL; Atlanta, GA; Bridgeport, CT; Denver, CO; Detroit, MI; Madison, WI; and Portland, OR. In October of 2016, the National Park Service announced Missouri and Maryland as the recipients of newly-added planning grants available through the second round of ORLP grants. NPS is expected to announce the remaining round two recipients this spring.

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to fund the ORLP at \$12 million in FY 2018 to support highly-leveraged investments in urban outdoor spaces and recreational opportunities. We thank you for considering our request and look forward to working with the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



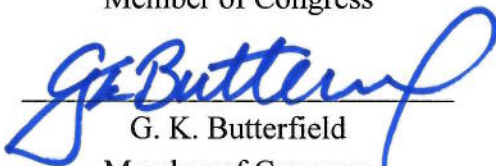
Kathy Castor

Member of Congress



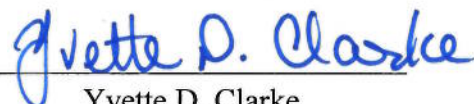
Nanette Diaz Barragan

Member of Congress



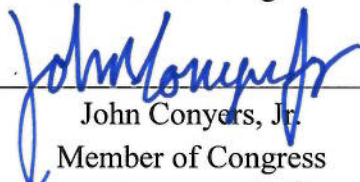
G. K. Butterfield

Member of Congress



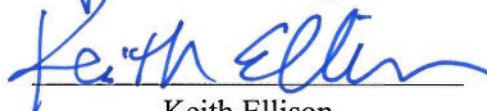
Yvette D. Clarke

Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.

Member of Congress



Keith Ellison

Member of Congress



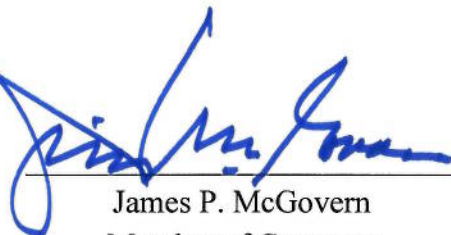
Eleanor Holmes Norton

Member of Congress



Barbara Lee

Member of Congress



James P. McGovern

Member of Congress



Mark Pocan

Member of Congress



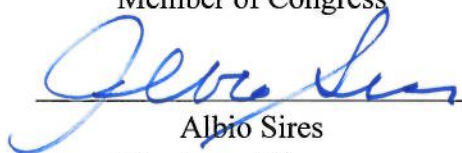
Jamie Raskin

Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell

Member of Congress



Albio Sires

Member of Congress



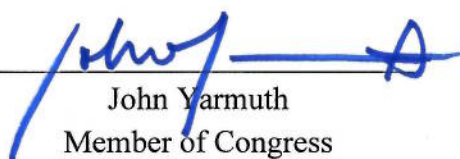
Niki Tsongas

Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson

Member of Congress



John Yarmuth

Member of Congress