

July 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - our nation's most successful conservation and recreation program that has supported projects that protect our land, water, wildlife, and way of life in every state and nearly every county across the country for over 60 years. In 2020, Congress passed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) to permanently fund LWCF, finally fulfilling a 60-year promise by ensuring that the \$900 million deposited into LWCF annually will be used for its intended conservation and outdoor recreation purposes and programs. This landmark legislation was signed into law by President Trump and supported by overwhelming bipartisan majorities on both sides of the aisle.

Unfortunately, LWCF is under attack. The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget proposes new legislation to reverse GAOA by opening up LWCF to divert funds for deferred maintenance – a bad idea that was specifically rejected by Congress when it passed GAOA. The budget also proposes the diversion of \$387 million from LWCF in FY26 from ready-to-go projects to non-conservation purposes – proposing to eviscerate GAOA.

This proposal would eliminate 90% of funding for land protection, outdoor recreation and hunting and fishing access to our National Forests, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and Bureau of Land Management lands, diverting those dollars intended for keeping public lands public instead to maintenance that should be paid for outside of LWCF, just as Congress directed in GAOA. This is robbing Peter to pay Paul — it is not allowed under current law and should be unequivocally rejected by Congress. We ask Congress to oppose this damaging diversion and support dedicated funding of LWCF for conservation and outdoor recreation in FY 2026 as envisioned in the bipartisan GAOA.

LWCF is not funded by taxpayer dollars: LWCF has its own dedicated funding source from offshore energy receipts, the original conservation offset for energy, that is guaranteed to flow permanently to LWCF, thanks to GAOA.

Federal and state conservation and recreation projects funded by LWCF are crucial to driving and growing the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy by expanding the numbers and accessibility of places people have to recreate. People need places to get outside to hunt, fish, paddle, hike, boat, and enjoy the outdoors. Over 90% of LWCF projects provide increased outdoor recreation access across the country and a vast majority of these projects included direct, new access for hunters and anglers. LWCF

has funded thousands of local, state, and federal projects that expand outdoor recreation access, conserve wildlife habitat, increase hunting and fishing access, protect drinking water, support working forests, preserve America's natural and cultural treasures, and create a better future for generations to come.

We call on Congress to oppose the diversion of LWCF funding and to block any attempts to amend and undermine the LWCF Act and GAOA. GAOA provides Congress with the ability to allocate LWCF funding to authorized LWCF programs and projects and we urge you to reject this cut to conservation and restore the full \$900 million to LWCF.

Any backtracking on this incredibly successful program must be met with overwhelming opposition, and we should continue to expand recreation access rather than divert funding from it as the President's budget proposes. LWCF is a solution for communities seeking to protect their quality of life, for increasing public access, for addressing clean water and land management challenges, and for growing the outdoor recreation economy by protecting our nation's iconic public lands.

We are grateful for your leadership and support for LWCF. Now is the time to protect this vital program to support conservation and recreation across the country.

Sincerely,

7 Oaks Ranch
Alabama Forest Land Trust
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
American Hiking Society
American Society of Landscape Architects
Appalachian Mountain Club
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation
Arizona Trail Association
Atoka Conservation Exchange
Back Country Horsemen of Montana
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bar None Stables, LLC
Bayou Land Conservancy
Birds Caribbean
Bledsoe Connor Holdings
Blue Goose Alliance
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Boone-Dutch Creeks Watershed Alliance
Bridging The Gap
Business for Montana's Outdoors
California Council of Land Trusts
Californians for Western Wilderness
Capital Region Land Conservancy

Catawba Lands Conservancy
Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy
Central Arkansas Water
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chiricahua Regional Council
City Parks Alliance
Clifftop Conservation NFP
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts
Coastal Land Trust, Inc
Colorado Canyons Association
Colorado Fourteeners Initiative
Colorado Mountain Bike Association
Colorado Mountain Mamas
Concrete Safaris Inc.
Conservation Partners
Conservation Resources LLC
Conservation Trust for North Carolina
Conserving Carolina
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Ding Darling Wildlife Society
Driftless Area Land Conservancy
Duncan Law Office
Eagle County Board of County Commissioners

EarthHeart
East Bay Regional Park District
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Educating for Ecological Literacy
Ely Outfitting Company
Empire State Forest Products Association
Endangered Habitats League
Eno River Association
Environment for the Americas
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina
Forest Society of Maine
Forests Forever
Forever Maryland Inc.
Freeport Wild Bird Supply
Friends of Acadia
Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of California Condors Wild and Free
Friends of Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Haystack Rock
Friends of Jean Klock Park
Friends of Katahdin Woods & Waters
Friends of Kauai Wildlife Refuges
Friends of Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Maine Coastal Islands
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Mason Neck State Park
Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge/Battle of Midway National Memorial
Friends of National Conservation Training Center

Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Oahu Refuges
Friends of Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Pool 9, Upper Miss Refuge Inc
Friends of Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Ruth B. Swann Park
Friends of San Diego Wildlife Refuges
Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the 500th
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Bill Williams River and Havasu National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Cheat
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge
Friends of the Front Range Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Red River
Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Wildlife Corridor
Friends of the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex
Friends of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Friends of Wallkill River National Wildlife
Refuge
Friends of Woodlands and Waters
Gallatin Valley Land Trust
Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for
Land Trusts
Georges River Energy, LLC
Glacial Lakes Conservancy
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Green Diamond Resource Company
Harford Land Trust Inc.
Heartland Conservation Alliance
Henry's Fork Foundation
Hill Country Conservancy
Ice Age Trail Alliance
Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts
Illinois Division, Izaak Walton League of
America
Illinois Environmental Council
Indiana Division, Izaak Walton League of
America
Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable
Islanders for the San Juan Islands National
Monument
Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League of American, Mon County
Chapter, WV
James C Kidd LLC
James River Basin Partnership
Jamestown Timberland
Justice Outside
Kaniksu Land Trust
Kansas Land Trust
Kingston Greenways Association
Land Conservation Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
Land Trust for Louisiana
Landmark Conservancy, Inc.
League of Conservation Voters
Lemhi Regional Land Trust
Los Padres Forest Watch
Loudoun Watershed Watch
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Maine Council of Churches
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy
Network
Mass Audubon
McHenry County Audubon Society
Mecklenburg Audubon Society
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of
America
Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Inc.
Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Momentum Conservation
Montana Association of Land Trusts
Mormon Trails Association
Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative
Mountain Mamas
Mountain Sports Flagstaff
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
National Coast Trail Association
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Native Prairies Association of Texas
Natural Resources Council of Maine
NC Coastal Federation
Nebraska Division, Izaak Walton League of
America
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
New Jersey Highlands Coalition
New River Land Trust
Next 100 Coalition
Nippersink Watershed Association
North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy
Northern Prairies Land Trust
Northwest Land & Lifestyle Properties
Northwest Watershed Institute
Northwood Alliance Inc
Ohio Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Open Space Institute
Openlands
Oregon Equestrian Trails
Oregon Trails Coalition
Outdoor DIVAS

Ozark Land Trust
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Palouse Land Trust
Partners in Forestry Cooperative
Partnership for the National Trails System
Pee Dee Land Trust
Peninsula Open Space Trust
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine
Pines and Prairies Land Trust
Platte Land Trust
Portland Trails
Prairie State Conservation Coalition
Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends
Reese Conservation Consulting LLC
Resource Management Service, LLC
RGS Resilience LLC
RiverBank LLC
Robbins Lumber East Baldwin, LLC
Robbins Lumber, Inc.
San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust
San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Sand Creek Massacre Foundation
Sanderella Media
Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
Save the Redwoods League
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Seno K/RLT Conservancy
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Shenandoah National Park Trust
Shenandoah Valley Conservancy
Sierra Club
Sitka Trail Works
Smith River Alliance
Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Somers Land Trust
South Carolina Land Trust Network
South Carolina Native Plant Society
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Southern Conservation Partners, Inc.
Southern Maryland RC&D
Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance

Spartina LLC
Sportsman's Club of Brown County
Stewards of the Arroyo Seco
Texas Cave Management Association
Texas Land Trust Council
The Bicycle Coalition of Maine
The BOC Outdoors
The Conservation Foundation
The Conservation Fund
The Frontera Land Alliance
The Lyme Timber Company
The Mountaineers
The Nature Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy, South Carolina
The Open Space Council for the St. Louis Region
The Piedmont Environmental Council
The Prairie Enthusiasts
The Vital Ground Foundation
The Wilderness Land Trust
The Wilderness Society
Third Act Maine
Three Rivers Land Trust, Inc.
Trust for Public Land
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Urban Tree Foundation
Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust
Virginia Trails Alliance
Wagner Forest Management, Ltd.
Wallowa Land Trust
Washington Association of Land Trusts
Washington Trails Association
West Virginia Division, Izaak Walton League of America
West Virginia Land Trust
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Western Rivers Conservancy
Wild Virginia
Willistown Conservation Trust
Winyah Rivers Alliance
Wood River Land Trust

