



April 20, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Mountaineers, founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is “to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.” Based in Seattle, Washington, we have over 13,000 members and guests – a passionate, engaged community of people who knowledgeable and care about the outdoors. We work to protect the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

We are writing today in light of the April 22nd hearing on the reauthorization and potential reforms to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to share our community’s perspectives on the invaluable role the LWCF has in creating opportunities for conservation and outdoor recreation.

The LWCF is the only is the only federal program dedicated to the continued conservation and access to recreation in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, monuments, and other federal conservation lands, as well as creating and developing state and local parks. **We believe that the LWCF is one of our nation’s most important conservation programs.** Protecting our nation’s, and Washington State’s, natural places so we all have access to recreate is imperative to the future of conservation and growing the outdoor recreation economy. LWCF has funded many projects that our membership enjoys, include close-in opportunities for nature, like the Mount Si Conservation Area, as well as wilderness-based projects, both very important to our human-based recreation community. If it is not reauthorized in essentially its current form, critical lands and outdoor recreation sites all across the country will be at risk.

We urge the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee to resist the call for counterproductive changes to LWCF as they work through the reauthorization process, and instead hold LWCF up as a shining example of an efficient and effective toolbox for every state and county in America to tap into when in order to address their community-based conservation and recreation needs and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Executive Director, The Mountaineers