

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski:

As strong supporters of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), we are writing to thank you for your leadership in crafting S. 2012 the *Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016*, and to urge you to ensure that Section 5002 of the bill is included in any final legislation that emerges from the Energy bill conference.

As you know, LWCF was created in the spirit of reinvesting the revenues from the sale of our national resources into future resources for all Americans – asset for asset. The Committee recognized the fundamental soundness of this approach – and the compelling need for continued conservation investments in all our states – when it adopted the LWCF language, Section 5002, and rejected weakening amendments. Like many of the 85 members who voted in support of S. 2012 on the floor, we consider LWCF a top policy priority in the context of the Energy bill and believe maintaining this provision is crucial to advancing a conference report through the Senate.

LWCF has had incredible bipartisan success over its near half-century of existence, touching all 50 states and nearly every county in America. It is a continuing investment in the economic driver that our federal, state, and local public lands represent. The parks, trails, forests, wildlife refuges, battlefields, historic sites, and working lands sustained by LWCF funding support an outdoor recreation and tourism sector that contributes a total of \$646 billion annually to the American economy, supporting 6.1 million jobs (1 out of every 15 jobs in the U.S.).

This well-envisioned toolbox is critical for all Americans as it fosters successful partnerships with states, localities, private organizations and landowners to meet unique and pressing conservation, recreation, and historic preservation needs across the country. LWCF has increased access for hunters and anglers on public lands, and has protected fish and game habitat for sportsmen. It preserves historical treasures from Civil War battlefields to our most recent history, such as the United Flight 93 Memorial in Pennsylvania. It helps to ensure that our ranchers and forest owners can keep working the land, and that our local communities can have parks and outdoor recreation sites.

We deeply appreciate the ways in which Section 5002 of the bill will sustain these benefits by permanently reauthorizing LWCF; refining the program's focus on prioritization, cost efficiency, and accountability; and ensuring that this highly successful program continues to meet communities' conservation needs while helping to protect and maintain our shared heritage. We also enthusiastically support the 1.5 percent sportsmen's access provision which is critical to

increase public access to public lands, as changing land use and ownership patterns create challenges to historic and much-needed access for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation.

The importance of these provisions is reflected in their bipartisan passage, not once but twice, by the Committee, and by the full Senate's decisive rejection of a proposed amendment to alter these provisions on the floor, by a wide bipartisan margin, before approving the bill by an overwhelming vote of 85 to 12.

We appreciate your leadership as conference discussions continue, and we want to reaffirm our support for retaining the LWCF provision in any final Energy conference agreement. Please accept our thanks for your efforts to date, and please let us know how we can help you advance this priority program so it can continue to meet the needs of communities across America.

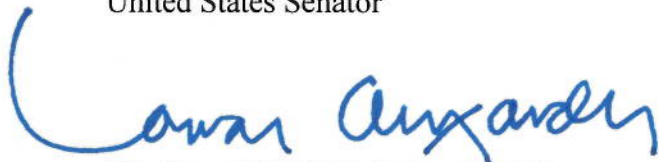
Sincerely,



Richard Burr
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator




Lamar Alexander
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Lindsey Graham
United States Senator



Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator

cc:

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman, Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member, Natural Resources Committee