

United States Senate

May 16, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 131
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Hart Office Building, Room 125
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you draft the FY 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, consistent with my previous request, I encourage full, mandatory funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The House Appropriations Committee recently released its proposed counterpart legislation, funding the LWCF at significantly increased levels. As we work towards full, dedicated funding for the program, I encourage you to allocate at least \$600 million of LWCF in FY 2020.

Earlier this Congress, we took a historic step to permanently authorize the LWCF by enactment of S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act by a large bipartisan margin. Permanent reauthorization received the support from 92 United States Senators and 363 House Members, a remarkable feat in today's divided Congress. As a champion of this legislation, I am thrilled we have been able to provide landowners, sportsmen, and conservationists with the certainty that the LWCF program will survive future generations. However, the time is now to build on this historic achievement. The proposed level of funding in the House legislation, \$523.9 million, represents the largest increase in discretionary funding for LWCF in 15 years. While permanent reauthorization is indeed historic, there remains a significant backlog of worthwhile projects in the queue in many states across the country that can only come to fruition if Congress backs up this commitment of permanent reauthorization with increased funding.

As you know the LWCF is a critical land management tool that has helped facilitate access to public lands for outdoor recreation, ensures family ranches can be passed onto to future generations, and provides a steady supply of timber to many of our mills struggling to survive. In fact, the LWCF has helped open nearly 70% of fishing access sites in Montana alone. LWCF has been a critical tool to protecting water quality for small towns and habitat for our state's iconic wildlife. As a lifelong sportsman dedicated to ensuring opportunities to enjoy our great outdoors for future generations, I urge your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
U.S. Senator