

June 13, 2018

The Honorable Tom Udall  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Pearce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Udall and Heinrich, and Representatives Pearce, Lujan, and Lujan Grisham:

We are writing to you today as elected officials in New Mexico because the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), one of the best programs our nation has ever enacted to fund conservation and public access to outdoors spaces, may disappear. Most of you have supported LWCF vigorously, and it would seem common sense to keep it intact, but it is set to expire on September 30 unless you and your Congressional colleagues say otherwise.

LWCF is America's most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level, ensuring that all Americans have access to and can enjoy our lands and parks across our nation. Without question, LWCF has done more to protect open space and develop outdoor recreation opportunities than any other federal program in American history.

For more than 50 years, LWCF has been hailed as the nation's most successful bipartisan conservation program, so it was gratifying to see Congress increase LWCF funding for 2018, demonstrating the continuing bipartisan and bicameral support for the program during ten administrations and right through to today's Congress. Thank you.

With all that LWCF has provided for recreation and enjoyment of public lands by Americans, it is incredible that the program is set to expire at the end of the current fiscal year (9/30/2018). Failure to renew LWCF not only jeopardizes funding for important local state and federal conservation projects, it also threatens our nation's outdoor recreation economic sector, which contributes \$887 billion annually in spending nationally, supporting 7.6 million American jobs. We are calling on you, our representatives in Washington, to ensure LWCF is reauthorized.

LWCF funding has benefitted the lives of countless Americans in nearly every state and county in the U.S. National parks like Rocky Mountain, the Grand Canyon, and the Great Smoky Mountains, as well as national wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, community

parks, trails, and ball fields have been funded by LWCF providing access to the great outdoors for the enjoyment of Americans. LWCF has supported more than 41,000 parks, ballfields, and other recreation projects that meet state and local priorities.

In New Mexico, LWCF has provided over \$312 million to protect and enhance lands enjoyed by millions of New Mexico residents and visitors each year. This includes lands purchased from willing sellers and added to Petroglyph, El Malpais, Rio Grande del Norte, and Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monuments; the Gila, Cibola, Santa Fe and Carson National Forests; Pecos and Chaco Culture National Historical Parks; and numerous landscapes in between.

Through the Forest Legacy Program, LWCF helps protect private working ranch and forest lands while also enhancing wildlife habitat. LWCF state assistance grants have supported over 1,000 projects across New Mexico's state and local parks including Mesilla Valley Bosque and Eagle Nest Lake State Parks. There are numerous pending and proposed projects in New Mexico that are in need of continued LWCF funding.

From the outset, Congress authorized that LWCF would receive up to \$900 million annually in royalties paid by oil and gas companies drilling offshore. No taxpayer dollars are ever used for this upkeep of our treasured outdoor spaces.

With the strong bipartisan support it receives, no one should be equivocating about the value of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The challenge for Congress is to act on fulfilling that value. But we are running out of time to act.

We earnestly ask you and other Congressional leaders to listen closely to the vast majority of Americans who agree that LWCF is essential to protecting the places we love.

Please support the Land and Water Conservation Fund and all that it's done for New Mexico by working to permanently reauthorize LWCF and reminding your Congressional colleagues to embrace the bipartisan spirit and join you.

Sincerely,

Hector Balderas  
New Mexico Attorney General

Maggie Toulouse-Oliver  
New Mexico Secretary of State

Peter Wirth  
New Mexico Senate Majority Leader

Mimi Stewart  
New Mexico Senate Majority Whip

Bill Soules  
New Mexico State Senator

Gail Chasey  
New Mexico State Representative

Joanne Ferrary  
New Mexico State Representative

Rudy Martinez  
New Mexico State Representative

Bill McCamley  
New Mexico State Representative

Matthew McQueen  
New Mexico State Representative

Angelica Rubio  
New Mexico State Representative

Rock Ulibarri  
Chairman-San Miguel County Commissioner

Tom Blankenhorn  
Taos County Commissioner

Harry Browne  
Grant County Commissioner

Alicia Edwards  
Grant County Commissioner

Jim Fambro  
Taos County Commissioner

Alfonso Griego  
Mora County Commissioner

Maggie Hart-Stebbins  
Bernalillo County Commissioner

Janice Varela  
San Miguel County Commissioner

Dan Barrone  
Mayor of Village of Taos

Nora Barraza  
Mayor of Mesilla

Linda Calhoun  
Mayor of Red River

Nate Duckett  
Mayor of Farmington

Mark Gallegos  
Mayor of Questa

Tim Keller  
Mayor of Albuquerque

Ken Ladner  
Mayor of Silver City

Alan Webber  
Mayor of Santa Fe

Roman Abeyta  
Santa Fe City Councilor

Isaac Benton  
Albuquerque City Councilor

Kasandra Gandara  
Las Cruces City Councilor

Chuck Howe  
Mayor of Angel Fire Pro Tem

Fritz Hahn  
Taos City Councilor

Pat Davis  
Albuquerque City Councilor

Darien Fernandez  
Taos City Councilor

Yvonne Flores  
Las Cruces City Councilor

Diane Gibson  
Albuquerque City Councilor

Jose Ray  
Silver City Councilor

Carol Romero-Wirth  
Santa Fe City Councilor

Signe Lindell  
Santa Fe City Councilor

Renee Villarreal  
Santa Fe City Councilor

Chris Rivera  
Santa Fe City Councilor

Gabe Vasquez  
Las Cruces City Councilor