

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 20, 2008

The Honorable Norm Dicks  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
B-308 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to restore funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state and local grant program to \$125 million for FY 2009.

The LWCF state assistance program provides matching federal grants to states and local communities to develop outdoor recreation facilities, parks, and resources. The need for funding these efforts stretches across the country, as the LWCF program has aided local projects in over 98% of all U.S. counties. It is considered one of the most successful partnership programs in the history of the Department of Interior. According to the National Park Service, the "LWCF grant program has been successful in encouraging States to take greater responsibility for the protection and development of recreation resources at every level."

Between 2002 and 2005, the President requested, and Congress appropriated between \$89 million and \$140 million per year for the LWCF stateside program. In sharp contrast, between 2006 and 2008, funding has averaged \$27 million, and the President's FY09 budget eliminates LWCF funding.

With the program woefully under funded the past three years, the unmet need in every state has escalated. In its 2007 Annual Report on the LWCF state assistance program, the National Park Service reported that states estimated their unmet need for outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition at \$15.6 billion. Additionally, 42 of 50 states meet only 20% or less of their total estimated need for local outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition. Clearly the need for matching federal investment is profound.

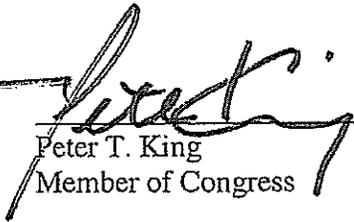
Since its inception in 1965, the LWCF program has funded over 41,000 sports fields, recreation facilities, and natural parks, including the purchase and protection of 3 million acres of land and green space. It has proven itself a successful partnership program over its 40 plus year history, but has seen its funding levels diminished as of late.

We strongly urge the Subcommittee to support an appropriation of at least \$125 million in FY 2009 for the LWCF state assistance program.

Sincerely,



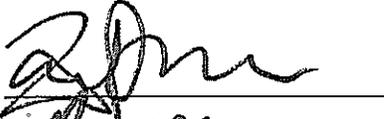
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Klein  
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Langevin  
Larsen  
Larson  
LaTourette  
Levin  
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Matheson  
Matsui  
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McIntyre  
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Renzi  
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Shays  
Shea-Porter  
Shuler  
Skelton  
Smith, Adam

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