

Dear Senator _____

As the (insert title as locally elected official), I urge you to invest in the protection of (insert name of locality and state) and our nation's natural resources by including a provision to provide full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in any new energy, oil, and gas reform legislation brought before the Senate. Additionally, it is imperative that a full and dedicated funding measure specify that forty percent of LWCF funding is provided for the LWCF State Assistance programs.

The LWCF is funded by drilling leases in the Outer Continental Shelf and is based on the premise that the extraction of one natural resource should provide funding for protecting other natural resources in perpetuity. While revenues from OCS leases has continued to rise, funding for conservation, especially at the state and local level, has been low and unpredictable. In Fiscal Year 09 the LWCF State Assistance program received only \$19 million, yet it was able to permanently protect more than 26,000 acres at the state and local levels in 2009.

When originally authorized in 1965, the LWCF specified that 60% of funding would go to the State Assistance program. Over the years language specifying the State Assistance share has been removed. However, language has remained specifying the Federal program shall receive a minimum of 40% of funds provided. As a result the Federal program has received a substantially larger percentage of appropriated funds and annual funding for the Stateside program has been minimal and at times zero. LWCF spending from 1965-2009 totaled approximately \$15 billion, but of that amount only \$3.9 billion was provided to the State Assistance program.

The LWCF Stateside program leverages state and local funds and fosters partnerships between all levels of government. The program also serves as one of the most efficient uses of federal resources as states and local communities often surpass the 50/50 matching funds requirement.

States and local communities provide the best access to affordable, close-to-home, outdoor recreation opportunities. Conservation efforts and efforts to get Americans physically active will need to take place at the local level and will require more dedicated resources to the LWCF State Assistance program as not every community is located in close proximity to a National Park. For instance in _____ (insert city or county) LWCF has funded projects such as _____ (insert project and any info about its benefits/value to community).

LWCF is an essential component to combating many critical issues impacting our community and our nation. During these difficult economic times, now more than ever, states and local communities need support to protect our most precious natural resources, and to help foster a new generation of youth who will preserve and protect America's landscape. Additionally, these projects lead to economic growth through job creation, increased property values, and tourism. And they help fight the obesity epidemic, as well as improve overall public health, by giving people of all ages the access needed to recreational opportunities so they may lead healthier, more active lifestyles. (Insert name of city, town, or state) seeks to partner with the federal government and solve these national issues at the local and community level.

For these reasons, I ask that you stand up for the neighborhoods and communities in our State by supporting full and dedicated funding of LWCF, and by championing the efforts to ensure the Stateside program receives the same minimum funding specification as the Federal program.