

60+ Western Elected Officials Call on Congress to Save LWCF

POSTED BY [MARTIN VILABOY](#) ON AUGUST 10, 2018 IN [.ORGS](#), [ASSOCIATIONS](#), [GREEN](#) | 43 VIEWS | [LEAVE A RESPONSE](#)

Durango, Colo.-based The Mountain Pact, an organization that works with mountain towns that have outdoor recreation-based economies in the American West, released a letter this week, addressed to Congress, asking members to permanently reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund. The LWCF is set to expire by September 30, 2018. [The letter was signed by over 60 local elected officials](#) from 10 states across the West who represent 566,765 year-round residents and 75,626,000 million annual visitors.

To accompany the letter, The Mountain Pact also released a report titled: [The Case For Reauthorizing And Fully Funding The Land And Water Conservation Fund; Why Congress Must Act](#). The report details how The Land and Water Conservation Fund supports mountain communities and why Congress must act to fully fund and permanently reauthorize the LWCF.

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is an essential component of so many western community’s overall economic development strategy, especially in light of the challenges inherent in our ever-changing economy. Full funding (and permanent reauthorization) of the LWCF will give towns like Ridgway the confidence we need to make necessary infrastructure investments and plan for our future. Ridgway’s future economic security demands that we continue to expand our many outdoor recreation opportunities, and I can’t imagine how we’ll do that without programs like the LWCF,” said Mayor of Ridgway, Colorado John Clark.

Morgan Goodwin, council member on the Town of Truckee, California said, “Public lands are crucial to the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of our community. Truckee is what it is because of the Truckee River and Donner State Park and those areas have been enhanced thanks to The Land and Water Conservation Fund.”

“Outdoor recreation and the health of the Whitefish community are directly connected to projects funded by LWCF. For example, LWCF was instrumental in ensuring the security of Whitefish’s domestic water supply through the purchase of the Haskill Basin Watershed Conservation Easement. Similarly, LWCF has played a key role in securing the Swift Creek Conservation Easement which protects water quality in Whitefish Lake. Permanent funding of LWCF is essential not only for Whitefish but other communities similarly situated,” said Richard Hildner, City Councilor, City of Whitefish, Montana.

Corinne Platt, Mayor of the Town of Ophir, Colorado, said, “So much of what is important to our community and why we live in Ophir is because of our proximity to landscapes like the Ophir Valley where we hike and explore. In the past 15 years, over 1,000 acres of forest land was protected by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This is a critical piece of legislation that impacts significant view corridors, wildlife corridors and recreation opportunities; it needs to be permanently reauthorized and fully funded.”

“The LWCF is a vital component of job creation and economic development for our community. Permanent reauthorization and full funding of the LWCF will encourage further infrastructure investments and provide a long-term funding solution to ensure protection of America’s natural heritage and Bend’s outdoor recreation opportunities.” said Nathan Boddie Bend, Oregon City Councilor.