



Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Falls Short - Again

Only half of the full funding level secured in Washington

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Durango, Colorado (December 19, 2019) – Today, Mountain Pact communities released the following statements on the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding level in the budget appropriations bill that passed the House on Tuesday, December 17. The Senate voted on part of the budget this morning and will vote on the remainder of the package before tomorrow's deadline.

Anna Peterson, Executive Director with The Mountain Pact, said, "We're dismayed and frustrated. America's most successful conservation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and the American people have been left short-changed yet again. The funding level lawmakers are seeking in the budget appropriations deal is dramatically under the \$900 Million funding level LWCF should receive."

Mayor of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, Jonathan Godes said, "Congress's failure to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund in this budget deal is a huge disappointment for communities across Colorado and has put our public lands and the economic vitality of Glenwood Springs at risk."

Mayor Pro Tem of Telluride, Colorado Todd Brown, said, "For 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been an essential tool for protecting and preserving outdoor spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of communities in every corner of the country, including right here in Telluride. Not only do we value our access to the outdoors, but we are economically linked to the health of our public lands."

Mayor of Ridgway, Colorado, John Clark, said, "We are disappointed that Senator Cory Gardner did not do more to secure funding to protect our most cherished public lands by funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the full dollar amount it deserves. LWCF is vital to the health, economies, and cultures of mountain communities like ours."

Eagle County Commissioner, Kathy Chandler-Henry said, "Eagle County has relied on the LWCF for funding to access and protect our public lands. The fact that appropriations are underfunded rather than permanently authorized and fully funded is a disservice to the public. In Eagle County our public lands are not only our treasured landscape, they are our economic engine. We are disappointed at Congress' failure to fully fund the LWCF."

Mayor Pro Tem of Frisco, Colorado Hunter Mortensen said, "The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been crucial to public lands conservation in the United States since its passage in 1964. These public lands are not only part of our heritage and our lifestyle, but a crucial part of our outdoor recreation economy. LWCF funded projects support the economies of our Western mountain communities."

Mayor of Avon, Colorado Sarah Smith-Hymes, said, "Mountain communities like Avon depend on public lands and water for our sustainable outdoor recreation economy. We are disappointed that Congress has failed to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and thereby endangering the very land we depend upon."

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More about The Mountain Pact

Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) is an organization that works with over fifty mountain communities in all eleven states across the American West to empower them to build resilience in the face of economic and environmental stresses through a shared voice on federal policy related to climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation.

The Mountain Pact and LWCF

Early this year [151 county commissioners, mayors, city, and town council members from all 11 Western states sent a letter](#) to their congressional delegations urging them to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The letter was signed by representatives from 45 towns, cities, and counties. 19 full county commissions and/or city councils also signed onto the letter. According to the letter, the elected officials represent over 1.25 million year-round residents and over 56 Million annual visitors.

Last week, The Mountain Pact hosted a press call with Western mayors to urge Congress to take action and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in the 2020 federal budget. On [the call](#), mayors discussed how the Trump administration's proposal to zero out funding for LWCF in the FY20 budget is hurting public lands and Western communities.