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## **Over 100 Western Local Elected Officials Send Letter to Congress Requesting Investment in Parks, Recreation & Public Lands in an Upcoming Stimulus Package**

Today, more than 100 mayors and local elected officials from across the West sent a letter to Congress urging them to include full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in upcoming legislation designed to provide economic stimulus to restart the economy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The letter points out how outdoor recreation is a critical driver of their local economies and that investing in full funding for the LWCF will help with a strong long-term recovery for gateway communities and states that rely on visitors to public lands. The letter was organized by the Mountain Pact with assistance from Western Leaders Network.

**Mayor of the City of Bozeman, Montana, Chris Mehl said,** “In the weeks and months to come, our parks, trails, and outdoor spaces will be integral to both our national and local coping and recovery. Great parks and green spaces--at the local, state, and national levels--make for stronger, healthier communities. LWCF funding is crucial to our communities.”

**Mayor Pro Tem of the Town of Taos, New Mexico, Nathaniel Evans, said,** “America’s public lands bring us peace of mind and generate economic revenue - both will be critically needed to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Funding for LWCF is imperative.”

**Mayor of the Town of Telluride, Colorado, DeLanie Young, said,** “Our national, state and local parks, trails, and public lands are a critical economic driver for communities big and small, urban and rural, across the nation. Across the west, the travel and tourism industries have been taking a hit in the current crisis. Investing now in full funding for LWCF will help with a strong long-term recovery for gateway communities and states that rely on visitors to public lands.”

**[SEE THE FULL LETTER AND LIST OF SIGNERS HERE](#)**

Federal lands contribute more than \$50 billion to the American economy each year and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in local communities across the country. Studies have shown that America’s [outdoor recreation economy supports over 7.6 million jobs, contributes over \\$887 billion in annual economic output](#); serves as the lifeblood for countless communities across the country; and that [every dollar spent on LWCF returns \\$4 in economic value from natural resource goods and services alone - over and above the economic benefit of the outdoor recreation economy and tourism](#).

Capital spending by local park and recreation agencies to build and enhance local parks and trails generates [an additional \\$64 billion in economic activity and supports nearly 378,000 jobs annually](#). Local parks generate \$154 billion in annual economic activity and support 1.1 million jobs.

“Economic stimulus aid should reflect America’s values and priorities,” **said Anna Peterson, Executive Director of the Mountain Pact.** “Our parks, trails, and green spaces are absolutely essential to restoring our country’s health and way of life amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is already wildly popular among Congress, enjoying bipartisan support—even that of the President—and the LWCF is our most successful and effective tool for keeping nature and wildlife within reach for millions of communities.”

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**For more information on LWCF, visit <https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/tools>**

*Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) educates, mobilizes, and empowers elected officials in over 50 mountain communities with outdoor recreation-based economies in the American West around federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.*