

OPINION

Call on Amodei to support Land and Water Conservation Fund | Reese

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For many, the American West is a dreamscape, a source of artistic inspiration or the backdrop for a cherished childhood memory of camping, hiking and exploring the great outdoors. For the citizens of Nevada, the American West is home. The mountains and deserts are our backyard and the trails and campsites pepper our favorite stories.

Those stories, and the lands that inspire them, are under attack.

Since 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been a champion of public spaces, investing almost \$60 million in Nevada alone. More importantly, it has done all this at no cost to the taxpayer. The LWCF funding model is simple — take royalties from companies mining the natural resources of oil and gas and invest those monies into protecting the land and water of our country. Originally a bipartisan initiative, LWCF has continued to have the support of lawmakers from both sides of the aisle for decades, proving that supporting public lands isn't political; it is just common sense.

Congress took the critical first step by permanently reauthorizing LWCF in 2019. Still, they stopped short of permanently funding the program, meaning the money intended for public lands are vulnerable to be siphoned off for other legislative pet programs and this administration is attacking that vulnerability.

Despite the bipartisan support, President Donald Trump repeatedly has slashed funding for LWCF since he took office, preferring to prioritize the private interests of corporations over the public interests of the residents and visitors across the nation. Just this month, Trump unveiled his budget which slashes the program's budget by 97%.

Reno is one of thousands of cities in the American West that benefits from LWCF grants through protection of acres upon acres of lands and waters as well as public playgrounds down the street or the community ballfield hosting everything from T-ball to adult league softball games.

And these projects don't just build community in our state, they bolster the economy as well. In Reno alone, LWCF has contributed to our Trane Outdoor Swimming Pool, the Truckee River Greenbelt, Crissie Caughlin Park, the Tennis Center, Fisherman's Park, Miguel Ribera Skate Park and the Double Diamond Park Development.

The program is truly a win-win for voters and our land alike, which is why I call on my fellow citizens to contact Rep. Mark Amodei, who sits on the House Committee on Appropriations Interior Subcommittee, to sound the alarm on this president's dangerous budget. We need to permanently fund LWCF, protecting it against attacks from this and future administrations once and for all. We in the West know firsthand the

powers of the great outdoors, and it's time for all of us to use our voices to protect our public lands for generations to come.

Devon Reese became the at-large Reno city councilmember on Feb. 15, 2019. He currently serves as Reno's vice mayor. Devon was born and raised in the Reno area. He is an avid outdoorsman, enjoys travel, competitive tennis and the arts. Outside of his Council position, Devon is a local attorney and primarily practices in the area of civil litigation. Devon and his husband are proud father of three children.



Devon Reese, State Senate candidate for District 15 in Reno, poses for a portrait in Reno on Aug. 12, 2016. (Photo: Jason Bean)