



# REVITALIZATION™

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*News, opportunities & resources to regenerate economies, heritage, farms & nature.*

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## ISSUE #123

### TO REVITALIZE COVID-19-DAMAGED ECONOMIES, 100 WESTERN U.S. MAYORS URGE CONGRESS TO RENEW THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND



On May 6, 2020, over 100 mayors and local elected officials from across the U.S. west sent a letter to the **U.S. Congress**. It urged the body 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.”*

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.

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.*”

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.

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.”

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,*” she concluded.

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.

*Photo of downtown Telluride, Colorado by [David Mark](#) from [Pixabay](#).*

**[See the letter and the full list of signers \(PDF\).](#)**

**[Learn more about the LWCF.](#)**

**[See The Mountain Pact website.](#)**

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