
Sen. Gardner announced his vision to "make the lame duck period a little less lame" and to ensure productivity on the LWCF by moving it forward with strong support from both Republicans and Democrats. He called the LWCF the "most important conservation program" the country has, going so far as to say it is "the crown jewel." Sen. Gardner stressed throughout his speech that Congressional leaders will do their best to fight for public lands, describing huge amounts of inaccessible public lands as having the potential to be unlocked through programs such as the LWCF.

Sen. Daines praised the LWCF for encouraging public access to public lands, which has subsequently increased the quality of life in places like Colorado and his home state of Montana. Sen. Daines said that Montana has “1.5 million acres that the public can't access.” He referenced Senate bill S.569, which passed out of committee on October 2, thanking Senators on both sides of the aisle for moving the important bill forward for a permanent, fully funded and reauthorized LWCF.

Next up was one of LWCF’s biggest Champions, Sen. Cantwell, the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Sen. Cantwell successfully defeated a number of amendments that sought to weaken S.569. She thanked her colleagues in the Senate for the work they’ve done on the LWCF, saying the “LWCF is a juggernaut of an ingredient for the economy,” going on to say it helps grow jobs, gives citizens recreational opportunities and provides piece of mind for communities. Sen. Cantwell concluded by saying that “nothing could be more important on our agenda,” and that Congress should not go into 2019 without passing full funding and reauthorization for the LWCF.

Rep. Gallego congratulated his colleagues on both sides of the aisle for coming together to get the LWCF permanently reauthorized and funded. He credits the program with benefiting even urban areas like his district, and providing $290 million in Arizona from the recreational activities that stem from the LWCF.

Sen. Tester called the program "the best conservation tool" that we have available for us. He said that "we need to get this done" and stressed that the return in Montana alone was $7 billion from the program.

Rep. Zeldin said the LWCF is not just important for the Republicans or Democrats but for the whole community including our children. He thanked everyone for their efforts and hopes the bill can get passed before Congress adjours. Sen. Heinrich echoed his peers by stressing the need for "full funding, mandatory funding and permeant reauthorization" and said that the LWCF is a "true success story." Rep. Fitzpatrick said reauthorizing the LWCF is "a no brainer," stating that it simultaneously advances the preservation of the environment and our economic growth.

Conservation advocates joined members of the House and Senate in support of the LWCF. Lynn Scarlett with The Nature Conservancy said that her group’s 1.5 million members have sent over 2 million messages to Members of Congress with a clear message in support of "mandatory, permanent authorization and full funding of the LWCF." Amy Roberts with the Outdoor Industry Association said that the LWCF helps enable the outdoor recreation industry to create jobs, "7.6 million jobs every year across the country," resulting in an $887 billion in economic activity. She reiterated that the LWCF is a good national investment by saying that the "industry is 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and we are growing faster than the GDP." Jenny Brandt with the Hispanic Access Foundation spoke about the use of film to encourage people to get outside. The film can be found at www.hispanicaccess.org/lwcf and tells five different stories about opportunities provided by the LWCF and echoed the theme of the day: the need for permanent and full funding and reauthorization of the Land and
Water Conservation Fund.

To contact your Members of Congress in support of the LWCF click here.