United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 11, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

As you begin negotiations with the House on the energy bill, we urge you to maintain key provisions from the Senate bill to preserve our outdoor heritage, including the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). We applaud the Energy and Natural Resources Committee's efforts to negotiate Section 5002 of the Senate bill. Without a doubt, the permanent reauthorization of LWCF contributed to the broad, bipartisan vote on passage of S. 2012, and we strongly support maintaining that provision in any final bill. We respectfully urge you to advocate for this provision as well as mandatory, full-funding for this important initiative.

For the last 50 years, LWCF has been one of our nation's most successful conservation tools. LWCF has supported projects that increase opportunities for hunting, fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation in every state in the nation. LWCF also partners with private landowners to keep working lands working while protecting wildlife habitat, watersheds and wide open spaces. From increasing access to our public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation to funding urban parks to protecting our cultural heritage, LWCF strengthens our economy and enhances quality of life in our communities.

Furthermore, as Senators representing western states with significant amounts of public lands, we will not support efforts to weaken LWCF. This fund is a valuable tool for federal land managers to acquire inholdings and other high priority lands for recreation and conservation purposes. Our national forests, national parks, and other public lands are significant economic drivers. Acquisitions and easements funded through LWCF increase access to our public lands, reduce management costs, support key fish and wildlife habitat, and provide new opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. Despite high-profile attempts to transfer federal lands to states, we firmly believe that keeping public lands in public hands is key to maintaining our western way of life.

In addition to permanent reauthorization, we need to move toward fulfilling LWCF's promise of using $900 million annually from offshore energy development to fund lasting conservation projects nationwide. Since it was established in 1965, more than $20 billion of the

funds set aside for LWCF has not been spent on conservation. It is time that we provide full, mandatory funding for LWCF. We look forward to working with you to that end.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you toward permanent reauthorization of LWCF.

Sincerely,

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator