

United States Senate

August 3, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We write to follow up on a March 19, 2020 letter addressed to the Subcommittee that expressed our strong support for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP) administered by the National Park Service and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

As you continue to finalize the FY21 appropriations bill, we request that the subcommittee fund the ORLP at \$100 million, instead of \$30 million. Funding the ORLP at \$100 million would match the request made in the House of Representative's FY 2021 Interior and Environment appropriations bill. With this funding, the National Park Service could award dozens of grants to communities around the country to improve outdoor recreation infrastructure, revitalize local economies, and enhance quality of life in neighborhoods.

The historic passage of the Great American Outdoors for All Act has shown that parks and green space play an essential role in our communities. In particular, parks provide health, economic, and environmental benefits. Additionally, the coronavirus crisis is demonstrating that far too many communities do not have access to safe, healthy parks. Investing in our nation's urban parks can address this issue while at the same time providing much-needed workforce development opportunities.

The ORLP, a competitive grant program, complements the traditional formula State and Local Assistance Program through a nationally competitive process that focuses on the outdoor recreation needs of communities in ways that will encourage people to connect with the outdoors. Priority is given to shovel-ready projects involving public-private partnerships, underserved communities, and those that provide youth with employment or job training opportunities. This initiative leverages non-taxpayer dollars by awarding matching grants at a minimum of 1:1 ratio and allows states to put forward the projects they believe best meet the outdoor recreation needs of their communities.

Throughout the short existence of ORLP, fifty towns and cities have been awarded a total of over \$28 million in federal funding with more than \$60 million in support from local governments, private firms, and non-profit organizations. Awarded projects have gone to 29 different states and included a range of activities from improving accessibility of playgrounds, to creating canoe and kayak launches and fishing piers, to restoring vacant industrial land for park uses. The ORLP is key in increasing access to outdoor opportunity and that is why the Outdoors for All Act, S. 1458, would codify the program and establish a pool of mandatory funding within LWCF.

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior and Environment to fund the ORLP at \$100 million in FY 2021 to support highly-leveraged investments for top-priority, close-to-home outdoor spaces and recreational opportunities. As this program is included as part of the overall funding for the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program, we ask the Subcommittee to ensure that continued funding for the ORLP initiative is provided in addition to robust funding for the formula grants to the states for conservation and outdoor recreation. We thank you for considering our request and look forward to working with the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator