

## **HOUSE MEMBERS URGE TRANSPORTATION BILL CONFEREES TO MAINTAIN SENATE PROVISION THAT DOUBLES FUNDING FOR LWCF**

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Reps. Rush Holt (NJ-12), Jim McGovern (MA-03), Mike Thompson (CA-01), G.K. Butterfield (NC-01), and Chris Murphy (CT-05) today led 146 members of the U.S. House of Representatives in writing to senior lawmakers to urge an end to the practice of raiding hundreds of millions of dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to fund other public projects.

“The Senate has already passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support, a provision in the transportation bill to end the raids on the Land and Water Conservation Fund,” said Rep. Rush Holt. “By enacting the Senate’s provision, we can provide nearly \$400 million more each year to conserve lands that are crucial to our heritage, our environment, and our recreation and tourism industries.”

The LWCF, which supports the purchase and conservation of lands through direct federal spending and state grants, is funded by a dedicated stream of revenue from oil and gas leasing in the Outer Continental Shelf. By law, \$900 million of these revenues may be used annually to support the LWCF, but Congress has repeatedly raided the LWCF’s funding stream. In Fiscal Year 2012, the LWCF received only \$322 million.

The Senate-passed version of the surface transportation authorization bill would ensure that the LWCF receives the vast bulk of its dedicated funding stream, \$700 million, for at least the next two years. The Senate approved the LWCF funding provision with bipartisan support on a 76-22 vote. The House-passed transportation bill, however, included no such provision.

The Holt-led letter – which is addressed to Sen. Barbara Boxer and Rep. John Mica, the senior lawmakers responsible for reconciling the House and Senate transportation bills – urges the conferees to “include in the final conference report on the surface transportation reauthorization the Senate-passed language on the Land and Water Conservation Fund.”

The letter adds, “As you may know, LWCF programs protect natural resource lands, outdoor

recreation opportunities, and working forests at the local, state, and federal levels, ensuring that critical wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing access, Civil War battlefields, productive forests, and other important lands are protected for current and future generations. The lands and waters sustained by the LWCF program drive recreation and tourism industries that contribute annually \$1.06 trillion and over 9 million jobs nationwide.”

“The LWCF is essential to preserving and protecting open space for future generations,” Rep. Jim McGovern said. “I’m proud to stand with my colleagues in urging that the conference committee keep the Senate language.”

“LWCF may not be an acronym that many people have heard of before, but chances are that it’s done some real good in their community by protecting open space and creating parkland,” Rep. Chris Murphy said. “The Senate’s bipartisan agreement on fully-funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund is something that should absolutely be included in any final transportation bill, and I’m glad that both Republicans and Democrats are weighing in to support it.”

“Time is running out for Congress to do their work on the transportation bill, and it’s important that they recognize that the Land and Water Conservation Funding provision within the Senate bill is a top priority for sportsmen and women,” said Paul Schmidt, Chief Conservation Officer with Ducks Unlimited. “We thank Congressman Holt and the 145 other House Democrats and 32 House Republicans that have gone on record supporting LWCF within the transportation bill.”