

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 28, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20500

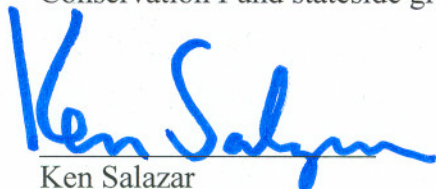
Dear President Bush:

We are writing to express our concern over your request to eliminate all funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) stateside grant program in the FY2007 budget. We find the elimination of the funding for this program unacceptable.

In 2006, a bipartisan group that included forty eight of our fellow Senators joined us in requesting that funding be restored to the LWCF stateside grant program. Few federal investments positively touch more American lives than projects funded through the stateside LWCF. Since its inception, the LWCF has underwritten the development of more than 40,000 state and local park and recreation projects in every geographic region of the U.S. The demand for new parkland acquisition and outdoor recreation facilities remains strong. In fact, in 2006, four-fifths of the states reported unmet funding needs exceeding 80%.

Congress established the LWCF in 1964 to provide money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. Specifically, the LWCF Act directs Congress to allocate royalties from offshore oil and gas development for the purchase of land, waterways and wetlands and provides matching grant assistance for state and community open space and recreation projects. It is significant that a considerable amount of the income going to the Fund has come about through the leasing of offshore oil rights. In fact, many of us have supported offshore leasing because we know that while one resource is being used another is being protected.

We urge you to support retaining the funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund stateside grant program in the FY2007 budget.



Ken Salazar
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator