

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman Calvert, Congresswoman McCollum, and Senators Murkowski and Udall:

The undersigned organizations involved in on-the-ground conservation across the U.S. for the benefit of nature and people respectfully request that you consider increasing Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations for the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) that encompass the natural heritage and resources of this great nation. These 22 distinct cooperatives are currently funded primarily through the budget of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As drafted, H.R. 2822 and S. 1645 currently call for a nearly 50% cut in funding for LCCs from FY15 levels, well below the \$8 Million increase requested by the Administration.

Our organizations represent land stewards, natural resource managers, and non-profit professionals dedicated to the development and success of conservation at the landscape scale. We believe that thinking and acting at that scale best conserves natural resources while also sustaining working lands and human communities. As experts in the theory and practice of large landscape conservation, we recognize the tremendous value of LCCs in the world of natural resource management and conservation.

The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are a prime example of the power of collaborative, bottom up conservation. These collaborative institutions provide a framework to ensure that practical science is available for making wise natural resource decisions. They create networks and synergies among federal, state, and private organizations. Even the costs of natural resource management are reduced, as LCCs minimize redundancies, provide pathways to share information and best practices, and create a platform for shared projects. And, unlike individual agencies or organizations, LCCs have the capacity to inform meaningful management decisions at the landscape level that are necessary for lasting impacts. In essence, the LCCs save taxpayer money through increasing efficiency and effectiveness among natural resource agencies across all levels of government and engaging wildlife and habitat conservation stakeholders.

With the ever-increasing complexity of natural resource management, organizations are struggling to fulfill their individual mandates, let alone respond to the greater conservation issues we face as a nation. The LCCs provide the means to do both. With sufficient funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the undersigned believe the LCC's can achieve collaborative conservation solutions that will improve our nation's natural resource assets and the many benefits they bring to the American people.

We fully believe in the vision of the LCC network and constantly witness the positive impacts of these partnerships in our own day-to-day work. This mode of collaborative, efficient, and effective natural resource management is the way of the future. We respectfully ask that, as you continue your deliberations on the FY 2016 Interior and Environment appropriations bills and move towards a final version, you work to restore funding for the LCCs to at least the enacted FY 2015 level.

Thank you kindly for your consideration.

Sincerely,