

Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20150

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

May 24, 2017

Dear Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The undersigned organizations represent local, regional, and national organizations involved in on-the-ground conservation across the United States for the benefit of nature and people. We are writing to respectfully request that you maintain or increase Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations for the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) relative to Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations. These appropriations are allocated through two line items in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget: LCC Cooperative Conservation and LCC Adaptive Science.

The 22 distinct LCCs, which in total encompass the entire United States, are playing an essential role in bringing together federal, state, local, and private sector conservation efforts. The LCCs foster effective natural resource conservation and good governance by helping to assure that public and private investments in conservation science, planning, and implementation are well coordinated across sectors and political boundaries. Congressionally directed review of the LCCs by the National Academy of Sciences, *Review of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives* (2015), found that the network is playing a unique and valuable role coordinating conservation activity at the landscape scale.

We are grateful for your subcommittees' continued support for the work of the LCCs. The final FY17 appropriated funding levels of \$12.988 million for LCC Cooperative Conservation and \$10.517 million for LCC Adaptive Science represent a solid funding base to support the operations of the LCC network and the individual LCCs. But additional funding is needed to help provide more robust central coordination of the LCC network, bring parity in funding across the 22 LCCs, and enhance LCC capacity for grant funding to specific projects with states, tribes, and other partners. LCC funding to partner projects through non-federal entities such as state agencies, tribes, universities, and non-profits has brought great leverage—more than a dollar of non-federal funding for each dollar allocated by the LCCs.

Our organizations represent land stewards, natural resource managers, non-profit professionals, and citizens dedicated to the development and success of conservation at the landscape scale. We believe that thinking and acting across boundaries leads to more effective natural resource conservation while also sustaining working lands and human communities. As experts in the theory and practice of landscape-scale conservation, we recognize the tremendous value of LCCs in the world of natural resource management and conservation. We are already consumers of the science, data, and technical tools developed through the LCCs, and view the LCC network as a critical coordinating body for work at the landscape scale.

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. With the ever-increasing complexity of natural resource management, organizations like ours are struggling to fulfill individual mandates, let alone respond to the greater conservation issues we face as a nation. The LCCs provide the means to bring the public and private sectors together for collaborative and synergistic conservation.

We respectfully ask that you consider our perspective in your deliberations on LCC funding within the FY 2018 Interior and Environment appropriations bills.

Thank you kindly for your consideration.

Adaptation International

Adirondack Council

American Forests

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Braided River

Center for Large Landscape Conservation

Clearvoyance Consulting, LLC

Congaree Land Trust

Conservation Northwest

Conservation Science Partners, INC

Defenders of Wildlife

Ecology Department of Montana State University

Eileen Shea Consultancy

Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

Geological Survey of Alabama

Geos Institute

Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Intertribal Council on Utility Policy

Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network

Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

Maine Mountain Collaborative

Open Space Institute

Point Blue Conservation Science

Pulse Ecological

Roeslein Alternative Energy, LLC

Round River Conservation Studies

Sky Island Alliance

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition

Southern Conservation Partners, INC

The Conservation Fund

The Intertwine Alliance

The Nature Conservancy

The Trust for Public Land

The WILD Foundation

The Wilderness Society

Timbisha Shoshone Tribe

Two Countries, One Forest

Wildlands Network

World Wildlife Fund

Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative