



EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET.

June 4, 2020

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our more than 3.8 million members and supporters, the Sierra Club is writing to ask you to support the Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422). The bill combines two priorities for the Sierra Club: permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and restoring our public lands by directing up to \$9.5 billion over five years to address maintenance needs within the National Park System, other public land agencies, and Bureau of Indian Education schools.

The Great American Outdoors Act will likely go to the Senate floor for a cloture vote on Monday, June 8, 2020. The Sierra Club strongly urges you to vote yes on cloture, and yes on final passage. We also urge you to oppose any amendments to S. 3422.

### LWCF

Created more than 50 years ago, the Land and Water Conservation Fund safeguards our public lands and waterways, provides recreational opportunities, and acquires new lands for public use. Since its inception in 1965, LWCF has funded more than 41,000 state and local outdoor recreation projects, and preserved National Parks, historic battlefields, ballfields, and cultural sites across the country. Its successes have garnered overwhelming support from the American public - polling shows that 82 percent of voters support LWCF - and become an important economic force that has created more than 9 million jobs. The program also enjoys significant bipartisan support on the Hill and across the country.

Despite its many successes, LWCF is starved for money, having only been fully funded twice since its creation. The \$900 million from offshore royalties is annually deposited into LWCF's account, but unfortunately, Congressional action has sent more than \$22 billion of that money elsewhere. The Great American Outdoors Act would fix that problem by permanently dedicating \$900 million annually for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

### Park Maintenance

Due to chronic Congressional underfunding, the National Park Service's (NPS) deferred maintenance backlog has reached \$12 billion. The Great American Outdoors Act would cut

into that backlog by directing up to \$9.5 billion to NPS' deferred maintenance over the next five years.

As America's best idea, the value of our National Parks cannot be overstated. In addition to protecting key ecological and cultural resources, our Parks provide meaningful, inspiring experiences for more than 318 million visitors annually. Our parks and public lands also tell the stories that define and unite us as a nation. Funds provided in this bill will secure these vital resources while preserving water quantity and quality, sustaining working landscapes and rural economies, increasing access for recreation for all Americans no matter where they live, and fueling the juggernaut of our outdoor economy.

The Sierra Club strongly urges you to support our parks and public lands by voting for cloture and final passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, as a clean bill with no amendments.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Brune". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Brune  
Executive Director