

BLOCKING PERMANENT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Passed: 68-30

SUMMARY:

The Senate tabled an amendment that would have reduced permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to five years (*February 7, 2019, Roll Call No. 19*).

BACKGROUND:

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was enacted by Congress through a bipartisan vote in 1964 to safeguard natural areas and provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. LWCF has been a vital source of funding for creating and protecting national parks, forests, open space, playgrounds, wetlands, wildlife refuges, and other treasured lands and waters. By investing a small portion of fees from federal offshore oil and gas leasing, the program helps strengthen communities, preserve our natural heritage, and increase the quality of life for every American. Since its enactment, LWCF has supported over 41,000 projects and protected important wildlife habitat in every state.

Although \$900 million has been deposited into the LWCF account each year, it has only been fully funded once, and more than \$20 billion of those funds have been diverted for other purposes. Permanent and dedicated funding for LWCF is needed to ensure that our natural, historical and cultural resources are protected.

Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) offered an amendment to S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, that would have undermined the permanent reauthorization of LWCF by limiting it to a temporary, five-year reauthorization. LWCF authorization previously expired in both 2015 and 2018. Short-term reauthorization would have increased the likelihood of future LWCF expirations, putting in jeopardy this critical conservation program.

OUTCOME:

On February 7, 2012, the Senate passed a motion to table the Lee amendment, 68-30. "Yes" was the pro-conservation vote.