



League of United Latin American Citizens

Full Funding for and Reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

WHEREAS, 86 years ago, the founders of the League of United Latin American Citizens, better known as LULAC, joined together to establish an organization that would become the largest, oldest and most successful Hispanic civil rights and service organization in the United States, and

WHEREAS, The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) created by Congress 50 years ago is one of the most successful government programs in preserving our country's precious natural and cultural resources and improving equitable access to the outdoors in urban and rural communities which is essential to the Latino community's health, culture, economic opportunity and the future of our children and grandchildren, and

WHEREAS, LWCF has been instrumental in creating opportunities for Latinos in urban, suburban and rural areas to get outdoors. It has been a critical tool in conserving national parks and historic sites, watersheds, working forests, wildlife areas, and state and local parks, trails and ball fields, and

WHEREAS, LWCF is based on the simple premise that as we extract natural resources that belong to our nation- offshore oil and gas- we should in turn protect and invest in onshore resources for future generations, and

WHEREAS, LWCF takes a portion of royalties from offshore oil and gas development and invests that money in protecting America's important public lands for future generations- be that an iconic National Park or an urban playground, and

WHEREAS, though LWCF is authorized to receive \$900 million annually, this cap has been met only twice during the program's nearly five decades of existence and, instead of being fully funded, nearly every year Congress diverts much of this funding to purposes other than conserving our most important lands and waters, and

WHEREAS, despite receiving only a fraction of its intended funding over the last 50 years, LWCF has led the protection of land in every state and nearly every county, has improved access to these public lands, and has provided matching grants for the creation of more than 41,000 state and local park projects, and

WHEREAS, LWCF supports and maintains the economic asset that our federal, state, and local public lands represent. Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, paddling and other

outdoor recreation activities contribute a total of \$646 billion annually to the U.S. economy and support 6.1 million American jobs, and

WHEREAS, manufacturing, retail or service related, most of these jobs are sustainable resource or tourism based jobs and cannot be exported, and

WHEREAS, over the last 50 years, LWCF funding has preserved public lands that are critical to the Latino community, including: Rio Grande del Norte. Organ Mountains., and Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, and Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge in California; Roberto Clemente State Park in New York; as well as public lands and community parks ball fields, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities in and around all major American cities including those that are home to large Latino populations, such as New York City, Los Angeles, Houston, San Antonio, Chicago, Phoenix, Dallas. El Paso, and San Diego, and

WHEREAS, the paths, trails, and recreation projects dependent upon LWCF funding are green spaces that contribute to the health and well-being of Latino families. The importance of LWCF to Latinos is underscored by the fact that our population is disproportionately affected by air and water pollution and other environmental factors that place our community's long-term health jeopardy, and

WHEREAS, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was initially authorized in 1968 by the President and Congress to last for 50 years and thus expires on September 30, 2015, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the League of United Latin American Citizens expresses support for, and urges Congress to act swiftly to enact full funding for and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund given the important contributions it makes to our nation's and the Latino community's health, well-being, economic opportunity and access to our nation's natural treasures.

Approved this 11th day of July 2015

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President