

March 9, 2020

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing millions of individuals and supporters across the country, we express our strong support for H.R. 4512, The Outdoors for All Act, and ask that you support and cosponsor this important piece of legislation. Access to parks and outdoor spaces provides significant health and economic benefits to cities and this legislation would facilitate the creation and improvement of parks and outdoor recreation opportunities without spending taxpayer dollars.

Parks and outdoor spaces can provide multiple benefits, including significant health, community and economic benefits. In 2015, local parks in the United States generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and supported 1.1 million jobs. In addition to acting as strong economic drivers, urban parks can function as dual-use spaces for both recreation and green infrastructure stormwater management, harmonizing the natural and built environments and creating resilient communities. Most Americans live in urban areas, which are the engines generating our nation's prosperity, and the most economically sound cities are the ones with ample and healthy parks and open spaces.

There is a tremendous need for outdoor recreation opportunities in the communities where most Americans live, work and play. As our cities and urban areas continue to grow, outdoor recreation opportunities have failed to keep up. Currently, one in three Americans does not live within a 10-minute walk of a quality local park. This limits the ability for kids to grow up experiencing the outdoors. The Outdoors for All Act would dedicate a mandatory funding source for the existing Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program, in addition to the traditional discretionary funding, that will help the public access or re-connect with the outdoors, particularly in neighborhoods that lack parks and recreational opportunities.

The ORLP, administered by the National Park Service and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance Program, awards grants that deliver funding to urban communities around the country to improve outdoor recreation infrastructure, revitalize local economies and enhance the quality of life in urban areas. The ORLP complements the traditional formula State and Local Assistance Program through a nationally competitive grant process that leverages non-taxpayer dollars by awarding matching grants and allows states to put forward projects they believe best fit the outdoor recreation needs of their communities. Additionally, priority is given to shovel-ready projects involving public-private

partnerships in areas with an outdoor recreation deficit and those that provide youth with employment or job training opportunities.

Since its inception in 2014, over \$28 million in ORLP grants have been awarded to over 50 communities hoping to improve close-to-home access to the outdoors. Awarded projects have gone to 29 different states and include a range of activities from improving accessibility of playgrounds, to creating canoe and kayaking launches and fishing piers, to restoring vacant industrial land for park uses. These awards help underserved urban communities address outdoor recreation deficits by supporting projects in cities and densely populated urbanized areas that create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, bolster green infrastructure stormwater systems and form connections between people and the outdoors.

We ask you to cosponsor and support H.R. 4512, the Outdoors for All Act, to establish a dedicated source of funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program and increase access to outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans. By guaranteeing a source of funding for the ORLP, the Outdoors for All Act ensures that this competitive grant program will continue to identify and highlight new ways of providing opportunities for expanding outdoor recreation in areas with great need, as well as promoting the development of new or enhanced partnerships for outdoor recreation in urban communities across the nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Forests

American Hiking Society

American Planning Association

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Landscape Architects

American Trails

America Walks

Appalachian Mountain Club

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Brown Folks Fishing

Brown Girls Climb, LLC

Brown People Camping

California Outdoor Recreation Partnership

City Parks Alliance

Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Hispanic Access Foundation
Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition
Latino Outdoors
League of Conservation Voters
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
Los Padres ForestWatch
Mazamas
National League of Cities
National Recreation and Park Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature For All
Outdoor Advocacy Project
Outdoor Afro
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Policy Outfit
OUT There Adventures
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Seirus Innovative Accessories Inc.
Sierra Club
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Venture Out Project
The Wilderness Society
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Vet Voice Foundation