

Hon. Aimee K. Jorjani
Chairman

Leonard A. Forsman
Vice Chairman

John M. Fowler
Executive Director



March 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) would like to express its support for the Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422). Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the ACHP is the independent federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on matters relating to historic preservation. The ACHP members voted unanimously at their March 13 business meeting to support this legislation. We are conveying our support to you in hopes that the House soon will be taking up this Senate bill or developing a companion bill. We are pleased to see that the House has several standalone bills addressing the goals of S. 3422 under consideration.

S. 3422, introduced by Senator Cory Gardner (CO), would provide \$9.5 billion over five years to address a federal agency deferred maintenance backlog, principally in our National Parks. The Department of the Interior estimates it currently has a backlog of about \$16.4 billion worth of deferred maintenance. The largest portion of that total—\$12 billion—reflects needed maintenance of National Park Service (NPS) properties. It has been estimated that approximately 47 percent of the NPS assets needing repair are historic, making deferred maintenance a significant threat to the long-term preservation of NPS's inventory of historic properties. Left unchecked, such deferred maintenance could jeopardize the enjoyment by future generations of irreplaceable historic properties throughout our National Parks.

S. 3422 proposes the creation of the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund from federal energy development revenues, which builds upon existing congressional policy precedent. Both the Historic Preservation Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) are funded by energy development revenues, and the successful track record of these funds demonstrates the wisdom inherent in using such revenues to help preserve natural and cultural resources.

The past achievements of the LWCF argue for its full and permanent funding, as proposed in S. 3422. The LWCF funds federal land acquisition for outdoor recreation and matching grants to state and tribal governments for the acquisition and development of public parks and other outdoor recreation sites. However, less than half of the funding set aside for the LWCF has been appropriated for intended purposes since the program was created. S. 3422 would ensure full funding in the future, while still giving Congress input into how the money is spent. The LWCF focuses in large part on conserving natural and recreational resources, but also is an important source of federal funding for protecting cultural resources.

The ACHP applauds the leadership of President Trump, Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, and the many bipartisan co-sponsors of S. 3422 and similar bills in the House. This important legislation will

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significantly aid in the preservation of historic properties. Please feel free to contact us if the ACHP can answer any questions regarding our support for the Great American Outdoors Act or if the ACHP can be of any further assistance. Our executive director, John Fowler, may be reached at (202) 517-0200.

Sincerely,



Aimee K. Jorjani
Chairman

cc: House Natural Resources Committee