



Legislation Text

File #: RES 19-1693, **Version:** 1

Declaring support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

WHEREAS, public lands in Minnesota and throughout the country are a treasure to the people of Minnesota due to their stunning beauty, wildness, recreation opportunities, and intrinsic value; and

WHEREAS, protecting public lands is essential to preserving America's biodiversity, especially at a time when the U.N. has reported that 75% of all terrestrial environment has been "severely altered" by human action; and

WHEREAS, 5.6 gigatons of annual Co₂ emissions are stored in marine and terrestrial ecosystems, making the protection of lands an essential resource in local, state and national efforts to fight climate change; and

WHEREAS, The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), created by Congress 54 years ago, is one of the most successful government programs in preserving our country's precious natural and cultural resources and improving access to the outdoors in urban and rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the LWCF has been a critical tool in creating, enhancing and conserving national parks and historic sites, national wildlife refuges, watersheds, forests, wildlife areas and state and local parks, trails, and ball fields, all of which are essential to the people of Minnesota and our health, culture, economic opportunity, and the future of our children and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, in the last 54 years, LWCF funding has preserved and enhanced public lands that are critical to Minnesota and St. Paul such as the Boundary Water Canoe Area and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area, among dozens of other projects; and

WHEREAS, sustained stewardship requires funding, and 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, while LWCF is authorized to receive \$900 million annually, this threshold has been met only twice during the program's existence and, instead of being fully funded, nearly every year substantial sums of funding are diverted to non-conservation related projects; and

WHEREAS, despite receiving only a fraction of its intended funding over the last 54 years, LWCF has led to the protection of land in every state, has improved access to these public lands, and has provided matching grants for the creation of more than 1,250 state and local park projects in Minnesota alone; and

WHEREAS, active outdoor recreation contributes \$16.7 billion annually in consumer spending to Minnesota's economy, supports 140,000 jobs which generate \$4.5 billion in wages and salaries; and

WHEREAS, the parks, trails and recreation projects dependent upon LWCF funding are green spaces that contribute to the health and well-being of Minnesota's families; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the City Council is in complete support for the full and permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund; be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council urges Congress to vote to permanently and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, given the important contributions it makes to our nation's and Minnesota's health, well-being, economic opportunity, and access to our nation's natural treasures.