

November 12, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, US Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, US Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Chair, US Senate Environment and  
Natural Resources Committee  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Ranking Member, US Senate Environment and  
Natural Resources Committee  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Manchin, and Ranking Member Barrasso:

On behalf of our organizations, the millions of supporters we represent across the country and our city and local partners in the parks and conservation, we write to express our strong support for passage of the EXPLORE Act this Congress. The EXPLORE Act will expand recreational opportunities across the country and enable more Americans to experience the benefits of green space and parks.

The EXPLORE Act includes the Outdoors for All Act which codifies the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP) and will provide much needed access to close to home recreation in park-poor neighborhoods. ORLP, established in 2014, and administered by the National Park Service, provides grants to cities for park projects in underserved communities. Through direct grants, the program aids communities with little or no access to outdoor recreation spaces. Funds can be used for the acquisition or development of public outdoor recreation spaces and facilities.

Parks and green space play an essential role in our communities by fostering better physical and mental health, increased workforce development opportunities, local economic growth, a more resilient environment, and community cohesion. Despite the profound and widespread benefits that parks and outdoor recreation offer, they are chronically underfunded with many systems facing a significant backlog of capital improvement projects.

In September, The National Park Service (NPS) announced the single largest ORLP grant round ever: \$254.68 million for 54 projects in 24 states for the redevelopment or creation of much-needed new local parks. The EXPLORE Act will further this progress, and we're closer than ever to ensuring access to parks and green spaces for everyone, regardless of zip code.

Passing the EXPLORE Act this Congress would help ensure that all everyone can reap the benefits of parks and recreational opportunities. We urge you to prioritize this legislation and pass it into law. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Battlefield Trust  
American Hiking Society  
American Hiking Society  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
Anza-Borrego Foundation

Appalachian Mountain Club  
California Council of Land Trusts  
California Park & Recreation Society  
City Parks Alliance  
Conservación ConCiencia  
Creation Justice Ministries  
Delaware Nature Society  
Florida Recreation and Park Association  
Forest Society of Maine  
Friends of Acadia  
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association  
Illinois Environmental Council  
Iowa Parks and Recreation Association  
KABOOM!  
Liberty Bird Alliance  
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust  
Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust  
Mountain Mamas  
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust  
mParks  
National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers (NASORLO)  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New Jersey Recreation and Park Association  
Pacific Crest Trail Association  
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society  
REI Co-op  
Save the Redwoods League  
Seattle Parks Foundation  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society  
Smith River Alliance  
Society for the Protection of NH Forests  
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy  
Surfrider Foundation  
Sustainable Ocean Alliance  
The Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge  
The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County  
The Mountaineers  
The Wilderness Society  
The Wildlands Conservancy  
Together for Brothers  
TreePeople  
Trust for Public Land  
Washington Trails Association  
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition  
YES Nature to Neighborhoods

CC: Chairman Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva