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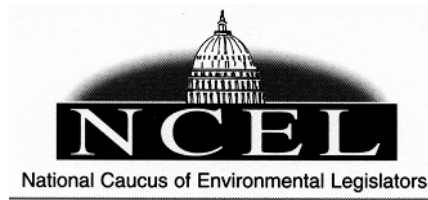
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Over 200 State Legislators Call on President Obama for Continued Action to Protect America's Public Lands

Washington, DC -- In anticipation of National Parks Week, 230 state legislators from around the country today released a letter calling on President Obama to continue to fulfill his State of the Union promise to use his authority to protect America's public lands.

"From Glacier National Park in Montana to the ragged coastline of Acadia, America's public lands contain some of the most beautiful sights in the country and some of our most important ecological settings," said Montana State Senator Mike Phillips (D-33). "It is pivotal that we continue to protect the last wild places in the country. Their value, which is already incalculable, will grow every more so with the passage of time." Senator Phillips is a member of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators who helped organize the letter with Environment America.

The letter thanks President Obama for recently using his authority under the Antiquities Act to protect the Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands in Northern California. Referencing the economic and societal benefits of parks and monuments, the legislators implore the President to continue to work with local communities to protect public lands by protecting the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region near Las Cruces, NM, and Boulder-White Clouds in Idaho as national monuments.

"The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks are the crossroads of New Mexico's diverse history and culture. They are home to flowering cacti, bald eagles and pronghorn antelope as well as over 10,000 years of human history," said New Mexico State Senator Bill Soules. "I look forward to President Obama acting quickly to protect this natural treasure and call on him to set a bold agenda to continue protecting landscapes that are ecologically, economically and culturally important for all Americans."

The letter goes on to applaud the President for proposing to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in this year's budget. LWCF is one of the most successful federal land conservation programs. Since its inception, LWCF has invested nearly \$14.4 billion into protecting state and federal lands including over 40,000 matching grants that have gone directly to states and county governments for local parks and playgrounds. These matching grants increase access to the outdoors for families while protecting wildlife habitat and drinking water sources.

"The Santa Monica Mountains and our public lands in California and across the country deserve the full funding they need and the protection they deserve," said Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, Chair of the California Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee. "I'm proud to stand with more than 200 legislators from around the country ready to work with Congress and the White House to ensure the

viability of one of the nation's most successful conservation programs, the Land and Water Conservation Fund.”

The letter comes on the heels of recent attacks by the House of Representatives on our public lands. Last month, the House passed legislation, dubbed the “No New Parks” bill, which limits the President’s authority to act decisively to protect deserving landscapes. Last year, the government shutdown resulted in the unpopular closure of national parks and monuments and the crippling of tourism-dependent economies nationwide. Last summer, members of Congress introduced a bill to completely zero out funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund although fortunately it went nowhere.

Through this letter, legislators hope to demonstrate strong public support across the country for the President to protect and invest in our public lands.

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Environment America is a federation of state environment groups working towards a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

www.EnvironmentAmerica.org

The National Caucus of Environmental Legislators is a network of like-minded state legislators committed to conserving and protecting our natural resources.

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