September 3, 2014

Dear Member of Congress,

We represent manufacturers, distributors, retailers and outfitters, small family businesses, entrepreneurial start-ups and international Fortune 1,000 companies that make and sell products for active use in the outdoors, and are writing to express our strong support for full, dedicated funding and reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

This year marks the 50th anniversary of LWCF and is an historic opportunity to fulfill the promise of full and dedicated funding at $900 million annually. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that this investment is realized, so that LWCF funding can protect and provide recreational access to our nation’s irreplaceable outdoor spaces.

Each year, the outdoor industry supports more than six million American jobs, generates $646 billion in direct consumer spending and contributes $80 billion in federal, state and local taxes. While many other sectors declined during the recession, the outdoor industry continues to be a bright spot in our economy – growing roughly five percent annually between 2005 and 2011. To maintain this growth, our businesses depend on access to the nation’s lands and waters and improved infrastructure in around these places. Full and dedicated funding for LWCF will enable communities across the nation to invest in the outdoor economy, create jobs and get people back to work.

LWCF makes investments in our shared outdoor heritage – from backyards to the backcountry – that are essential to outdoor companies, our consumers and the health and vitality of urban and rural communities. This program represents a promise that was made to the American people 50 years ago to take the proceeds from natural resource development in our nation’s Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and invest a small portion of those dollars in conservation and outdoor recreation. Yet, nearly every year, the majority of LWCF funds are diverted to other, unrelated purposes. Recent bipartisan polling shows that 85 percent of American voters want and expect the nation to continue to invest in LWCF, a level of support that has been consistent over the years regardless of demographic, income and political differences.

Our businesses, and the 140 million Americans who participate in outdoor recreation each year, depend on LWCF for a healthy environment, high quality of life and access to outdoor recreation. Full, dedicated funding and the reauthorization of LWCF will help our businesses grow and give Americans more places to enjoy high quality outdoor recreation.

We urge you to support a long-term solution for LWCF that includes full funding at $900 million annually, and look forward to working with you to find this solution that will protect and grow our outdoor economy.

Sincerely,