



RESTORE OUR PARKS (AND PUBLIC LANDS) ACT

TALKING POINTS

- In 1872, the first national park was established for “the benefit and enjoyment of the people.” Since then, over 14 billion people have visited a National Park Service (NPS) property, proving that our public lands remain America’s greatest natural treasures.
- Funding for NPS has not kept up with the demand and strain put on our parks. Due to lack of adequate funding, NPS has deferred maintenance projects for years, accumulating a nearly \$12 billion backlog of projects.
- Most deferred projects are infrastructure-related, including the maintenance of 5,500 miles of paved roads; 28,000 buildings, many historic in nature; 1,700 bridges; 18,000 miles of trails; and more than 1,800 separate wastewater systems.
- S. 500, the Restore Our Parks Act, and H.R. 1225, the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act, were introduced on February 14, 2019. These bills would create a Legacy Restoration Fund that dedicates up to \$6.5 billion over five years to invest in infrastructure on public lands.
- This fund would allocate 50 percent of oil and gas royalties not already obligated to other funds or projects, and it would not divert any dollars away from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The funding, capped at \$1.3 billion per year, would be available yearly without further appropriation from Congress and cost nothing to taxpayers.
- There is one major difference between the two bills. The Senate version would only fund NPS projects, but the House version would provide funding to projects for other public land agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Landscape architects have been at the forefront in the design and planning of our national parks and public lands. For over a century, landscape architects have worked with NPS to design and maintain these properties, and they will continue to be stewards of these treasured places.
- With more than 318 million visitors last year alone, our national parks attract tourists, conservationists, school groups, outdoorsmen and women, scientists, families, adventure seekers, and other people from all walks of life. This legislation would ensure that our parks and public lands will be maintained and accessible for the short term and for generations to come.
- **The ASK:** Urge your Senator to cosponsor S. 500, the Restore Our Parks Act, and urge your House of Representatives legislator to cosponsor H.R. 1225, the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act.

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION AND JOB CREATION ACT

TALKING POINTS

- The Clean Water Act (CWA) became law in 1972, to protect our most vital natural resource—water. Before the CWA many water sources across the country were so polluted they were unusable for drinking water, recreation, or even cleaning. Since the passage of CWA the quality of America’s rivers, lakes, streams, and other bodies of water has improved exponentially.
- In order to help states and localities better implement the CWA, Congress passed an amendment in 1987 creating the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The CWSRF provides funding to states to assist localities in the construction and maintenance of wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Through CWSRF, states are able to offer communities below-market loans to design, plan, build, or update water infrastructure.
- The Environmental Protection Agency prioritizes the use of green infrastructure through CWSRF to build more sustainable, resilient, and less-expensive projects. Unfortunately, CWSRF has not been reauthorized in nearly 30 years, leaving the program vulnerable.
- To address the lapse in reauthorization and to update this crucial program, a bipartisan group of Representatives introduced H.R. 1497, the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act, on March 5, 2019.
- This legislation authorizes CWSRF for five years and includes an increase in allowable funding of up to \$4 billion per year. This legislation would create a \$600 million pilot program, emphasizing resiliency and sustainability, to address wet weather discharge through the promotion of integrated water resource management. It also authorizes an additional \$900 million for community grants to maintain and update combined stormwater and wastewater management infrastructure.
- CWSRF is vital to decreasing pollution and creating resilient infrastructure. Landscape architects use CWSRF to plan and design projects to create water and stormwater projects that uphold clean water standards.
- **The ASK:** Urge your House of Representatives legislator to cosponsor H.R. 1497, the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act, and urge your Senator to work to introduce companion legislation in the Senate.



TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES ENHANCEMENT ACT

TALKING POINTS

- Communities across America increasingly want active transportation projects, such as bicycle, pedestrian, and trails projects, that provide cost-effective transportation choices, strengthen local economies, improve public health, manage stormwater, and create local job opportunities.
- The Transportation Alternatives (TA) program is a set-aside program within the Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Block Grant program. The program provides funding for states and other entities to plan, design, and construct smaller-scale transportation projects, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and community improvements including historic preservation, vegetation management, environmental mitigation related to stormwater, and habitat connectivity.
- The TA program provides nearly half of all federal funding for bicycle and walking projects. Currently, the program is funded at \$850 million a year. However, communities request nearly twice that amount each year, demonstrating the need for the program and increased funding.
- To address communities' needs for additional active transportation projects, S. 1098, the Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act, was introduced in the U.S. Senate on April 9, 2019. This legislation would increase funding for the TA program to approximately \$1.2 billion. The bill would increase local access to the program by allowing states to use 34 percent of their TA funding for state-run grant programs and distribute 66 percent of TA funding to local communities. Additionally, 5 percent of TA funding would be used for technical assistance to help communities with the application process for the program.
- Landscape architects play an essential role in the planning, designing, and implementation of active transportation projects, whether it is creating bicycle and pedestrian pathways that lead to critical daily activities, designing recreational trails projects, or ensuring that America's children have safe routes to school. A recent ASLA survey showed that landscape architects overwhelmingly access the Transportation Alternatives program to plan and design community active transportation projects.
- Active transportation projects help address public health concerns. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities recognizes the importance of physical activity, which will significantly reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The Call to Action specifically calls on policy makers and other stakeholders to design and maintain streets that make it easier and safer for people to walk, use a wheelchair, ride a bike, and be active in other ways.
- Between 2008 and 2017, drivers struck and killed 49,340 people who were walking on streets all across the United States. Well-designed active transportation projects help save lives with infrastructure that provides safer routes for pedestrians and bicyclists. These projects will help to reverse the trend of increasing pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities.
- Providing additional funding for and local access to the TA program will allow more communities to have active transportation projects that provide safe, healthy, and accessible transportation choices that also provide other community benefits.
- **The ASK:** Urge your Senator to cosponsor S. 1098, the Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act, and urge your House of Representatives legislator to work to introduce companion legislation in the House.