

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2004

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior
B308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior
B308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

We are writing to express our strong support for increased funding for the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). This system, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), represents some of the most spectacular and culturally significant areas in our country. Their sound management is vitally important to the American people and to state, tribal, and local communities throughout the West.

The NLCS is comprised of approximately 26 million acres created both by congressional enactment and presidential directive, including 15 National Monuments and 15 National Conservation Areas. The NLCS provides an important opportunity to demonstrate the agency's commitment to the stewardship of some of the "crown jewels" of America's public lands. With over 800 units, the NLCS offers havens of solitude, expanses of pristine wild lands, archeological and paleontological treasure troves, critical wildlife habitats, and unmatched recreation opportunities to tens of thousands of people each year.

We recognize that we are operating in a time of constrained budgets. However, the NLCS has been underfunded since its inception in 2000, and is in critical need of adequate resources just to meet the planning requirements and to manage the growing number of visitors for these new units. Therefore, we specifically request an increase for the NLCS over the FY04 budget for resource protection, land acquisition, archeological inventories, and law enforcement capability. Additionally, we strongly support the President's FY 2005 Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Priorities for NLCS units and encourage you to appropriate funds for these projects accordingly.

Again, we thank you for your support of the NLCS and look forward to working with you throughout the appropriations process.

Sincerely,



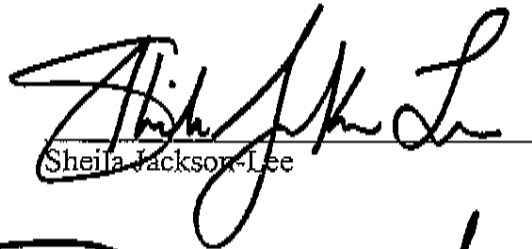
Tom Udall



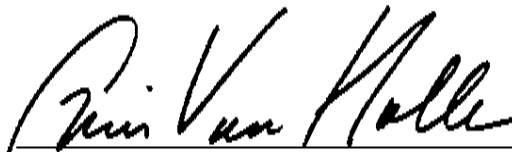
Nick J. Rahall II



Barbara Lee



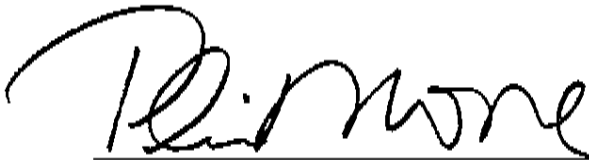
Sheila Jackson-Lee



Chris Van Hollen



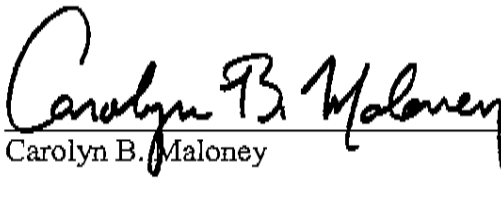
Raúl M. Grijalva



Dennis Moore



Dale E. Kildee




Carolyn B. Maloney




Jim McDermott

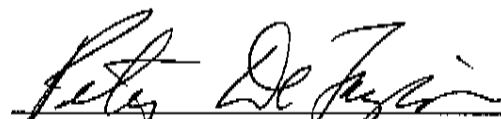


Ed Case




Mark Udall

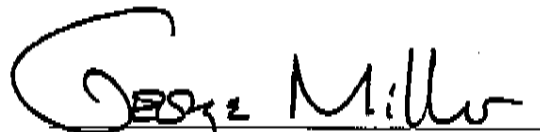

Lois Capps

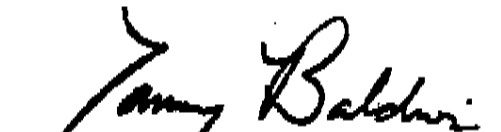

Peter A. DeFazio



Rush D. Holt


Gary L. Ackerman

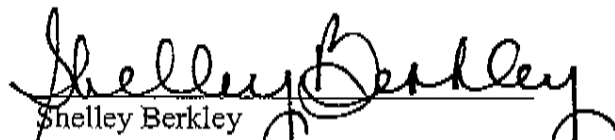

Wm. Lacy Clay

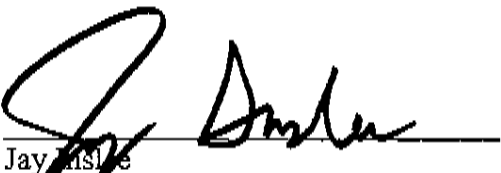

George Miller

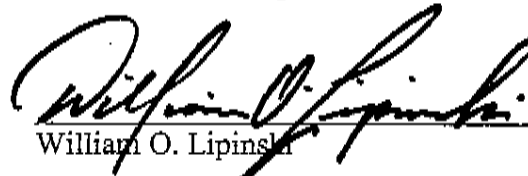

Tammy Baldwin

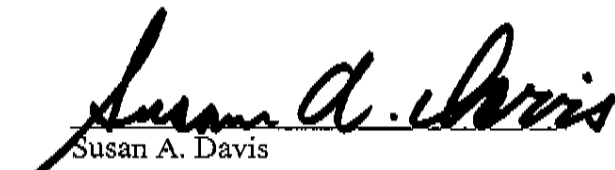

Anthony D. Weiner


Mike Ross


Shelley Berkley



Jay Inslee

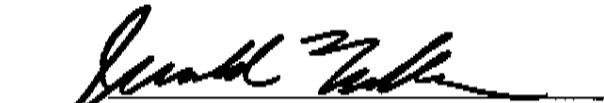

William O. Lipinski


Susan A. Davis

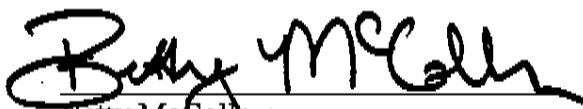

Earl Blumenauer


Rosa L. DeLauro

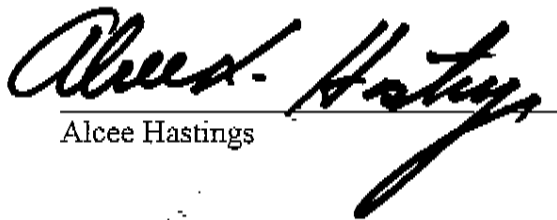

Mike Thompson


Jerrold Nadler


Zoe Lofgren


Betty McCollum


Neil Abercrombie


Alcee Hastings


Bob Filner