

# THE CONSERVATION FUND

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **SUCCESSFUL WESTERN LAND EXCHANGE PROGRAM ONE STEP CLOSER TO REAUTHORIZATION**

#### *FLTFA Reauthorization Coalition Applauds House Committee for Advancing Bill*

**ARLINGTON, Va. (March 7, 2018)** — Conservation organizations, sportsmen’s groups, and outdoor recreation groups applaud the House Natural Resources Committee for unanimously voting to advance legislation introduced by Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) to permanently reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) (H.R. 5133). Cosponsors include Representatives Scott Tipton (R-CO) and Greg Gianforte (R-MT). FLTFA is a modified land exchange program for the West that increases recreational access to public lands, supports economic development, and consolidates land ownership. The program is currently expired and unavailable.

If congressionally reestablished, FLTFA would facilitate a land exchange program, allowing land sale proceeds to fund land acquisitions. Under FLTFA, strategic federal land sales by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contribute to an account for the purchase of high-priority conservation lands within or adjacent to federal lands in the eleven contiguous western states and Alaska, as well as for administrative costs of BLM land sales.

From FLTFA’s creation in 2000 to its expiration in 2011, the program successfully allowed the BLM to complete hundreds of sales of lands identified for disposal, including to ranchers who expanded their operations, cities that built new facilities, companies that enhanced their businesses, and other private and local government landowners. The FLTFA program used those sale proceeds “in exchange” for 39 recreational access and conservation projects with willing sellers, including:

- protecting a scenic route at Zion National Park in Utah,
- providing more hiking and climbing at Red Rocks National Conservation Areas in Nevada,
- preserving big game habitat at Elk Springs Area of Critical Environmental Concern in New Mexico, and
- providing more public access for fishing at the North Platte River Special Recreation Management Area in Wyoming.

“Both local economies and the environment benefit from FLTFA—it is a win for the West to bring this lands program back,” said **Larry Selzer, President and CEO of The Conservation Fund**, the organization leading the FLTFA Reauthorization Coalition. “We are grateful for Chairman Bishop’s and others’ leadership on the bill and look forward to working with Congress on reauthorizing FLTFA, a common-sense solution for America.”

# THE CONSERVATION FUND

A diverse list of over 83 groups signed a letter of support to Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) for today's Committee markup, and over 165 groups have supported permanent FLTFA reauthorization since it expired.

"Reauthorizing FLTFA provides an opportunity for the sportsmen's community to work with federal agencies and willing landowners to increase hunting and fishing access throughout the West," said **Jeff Crane, President of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation**. "The ability to make strategic investments that provide access opportunities where they currently do not exist is critical to ensuring a bright future for our nation's outdoor heritage."

"The Boone and Crockett Club applauds Chairman Rob Bishop and the Natural Resources Committee for advancing a revised Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, which will fund public access for hunting and fishing," said **Ben B. Hollingsworth, President of the Boone and Crockett Club**. "Better access to public lands is vital to Americans who want to enjoy public lands for hunting. Today's mark-up is a critical step in the effort to reauthorize FLTFA."

"The Mule Deer Foundation greatly appreciates Chairman Bishop leading a bill to reauthorize FLTFA," said **Miles Moretti, President and CEO of the Mule Deer Foundation**. "This program has helped to secure priority habitat in the West that is important for mule deer, sage-grouse and other wildlife species. In addition, FLTFA has improved resource management by strategically consolidating 'checkerboard' public and private lands to conserve critical migratory corridors and winter range. We thank the congressmen for their leadership and look forward to permanently reauthorizing this program that has been so effective throughout the West."

"We appreciate Chairman Bishop's actions to introduce and advance a thoughtful reauthorization of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act," said **Whit Fosburgh, President and CEO of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**. "FLTFA is broadly supported and critical to America's public lands legacy, because it addresses local community needs, while successfully conserving important wildlife habitat and enhancing access to our public lands for hunting and fishing."

"Chairman Bishop has shown real leadership in finding a way to move this important conservation bill forward," said **Collin O'Mara, President and CEO for the National Wildlife Federation**. "The federal land transaction program benefits outdoorsmen and women and wildlife by securing wildlife habitat and public access, and Chairman Bishop has our thanks and support for his effort to renew this program."

Lands protected by FLTFA enhance public access to popular recreational destinations and support the local tourism economy through retail sales, hotels, restaurants, gas stations and more. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation in the West supports more than 2 million jobs and provides \$254 billion in consumer spending and \$17.3 billion in state and local tax revenue.

# THE CONSERVATION FUND

In the Senate, U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) introduced a permanent FLTFA reauthorization bill (S. 2185) that is also widely supported. Additional cosponsors of the Senate legislation include U.S. Senators Tom Udall (D-N.M.), James Risch (R-Idaho), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), and Jon Tester (D-Mont.).

A copy of the House bill is available [here](#).

For more information about FLTFA Reauthorization, visit [www.fltfaf.org](http://www.fltfaf.org).

###