

# THE CONSERVATION FUND

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **THE CONSERVATION FUND PRAISES SENATORS FOR INTRODUCING BIPARTISAN BILL TO REAUTHORIZE CRITICAL WESTERN LANDS PROGRAM**

*Media Statement by Larry Selzer, President & CEO, The Conservation Fund*

**ARLINGTON, Va. (Oct. 22, 2015)** — “The Conservation Fund applauds Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Dean Heller (R-NV) for introducing bipartisan legislation to permanently reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), a critical western lands program that funds strategic conservation efforts, increases public access for public lands, supports economic development and consolidates land ownership. Original cosponsors include Senators Tom Udall (D-NM), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Jon Tester (D-MT), Steve Daines (R-MT), Ron Wyden (D-WY) and James Risch (R-ID).

“FLTFA is important for local economies and conservation in the western United States. We appreciate congressional leadership to reinstate this common sense program. FLTFA provides economic opportunities for businesses, counties, ranchers and others wishing to acquire Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and also ensures high priority conservation lands are protected at national forests, refuges, parks and BLM areas. Additionally, this legislation helps federal agencies and other private and public landowners consolidate land ownership, which allows for more efficient land management and expanded business operations. We look forward to working with Senators Heinrich, Heller and others on reauthorizing FLTFA.”

*Originally enacted in 2000, FLTFA is a program for the eleven contiguous western states and Alaska that uses a “land for land” approach through which strategic federal land sale revenue provides funding for priority land conservation within or adjacent to federal lands. Before FLTFA’s authority expired in July 2011, the Bureau of Land Management completed hundreds of land sales, including to ranchers who expanded their operations, cities that built new facilities, companies that enhanced their businesses, and other landowners. These sales generated over \$117 million and funded 39 conservation projects with willing sellers. Projects included river frontage for fly-fishing access at North Platte River Special Recreation Management Area, big-game winter habitat at Elk Springs Area of Critical Environmental Concern in New Mexico, historic preservation at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado, and many other sites. These new sites provide more public access to public lands and enhance the local tourism economy through retail sales, hotels, restaurants, gas stations and more.*

#### **About The Conservation Fund**

At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states to protect more than 7.5 million acres of land since 1985.

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