



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Date: September 21, 2018
Subject: Release of the FY2018 LWCF Apportionment

On September 18 Secretary Zinke officially announced the apportionment of \$100 million appropriated from Land and Water Conservation Fund by Congress for FY2018. The actual signed apportionment letters are on their way to your Governors, but I am passing along a copy of the letter and the signed apportionment certificate for your benefit.

The \$100 million in LWCF funding is in addition to the \$61.3 million in GOMESA funding apportioned in June of this year. Thus for FY2018 a total of \$161.3 million for LWCF State and Local Assistance is dedicated to supporting and protecting close to home outdoor recreation opportunities.

We are just about done processing the grants submitted in our final round that closed the end of July. For those States, including Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, and Washington, that submitted applications requesting funding from the \$100 million apportionment, we were able to obligate those funds for your projects. We really appreciate your commitment and diligence in queueing up projects that could use this funding despite the late timing of this year's apportionment.

This year's funding represents the third year of LWCF appropriations at or just under \$100 million, and the first year the program saw meaningful levels of funding as envisioned for GOMESA. I believe this trend will continue. In fact, in FY2019 it is looking positive that the LWCF State and Local Assistance program will see another increase if the GOMESA receipts received comes close to the estimate and Congress continues its support for Stateside LWCF comparable to the last three years. With this trend of increased funding and the three year obligation period required by the LWCF Act, we encourage you to actively work to submit projects for all available funding balances and anticipated funding levels. We cannot take these funding levels for granted -- Congressional Appropriations Committee staff are paying particularly close attention to the unobligated balances for the program. Recently they have considered the idea of providing less newly appropriated dollars and instead requiring a portion of the authorized amount to come from unobligated funding. We will have a better picture after the close of the fiscal year when we can tally the final carry over balances, but it would not be unreasonable to expect an unobligated balance exceeding \$150 million. The faster we obligate the funds the more likely Appropriations Staff are to continue to support the increased funding.

As for timing of the FY2019 apportionment(s), although Congress is working to finish up an appropriations bill for Interior before October 1 and the new fiscal year, I believe it's likely we will see another Continuing Resolution that keeps the program operational through December 7 while Congress finishes its work. As mandatory funding the GOMESA amount should be available for apportionment early in the fiscal year; but we will monitor the Appropriations process to determine whether we should start moving a package for the GOMESA funds forward or if it makes sense to wait to do a combined LWCF and GOMESA apportionment. Regardless of the FY2019 apportionment process I wanted to remind everyone that we will begin accepting new applications on December 1.

Finally, technically LWCF Act is set to expire in 9 days. However, I want to reiterate and reassure that should that come to pass, it is still business as usual – nothing changes -- for the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program. The authority for the program continues indefinitely and regardless of appropriations, we will still be receiving GOMESA funding that is not subject to the appropriations process. The only change that would occur as a result of the lapse would be that oil and gas revenue would all be sent to the Treasury, instead of a portion going to LWCF. Regardless, I believe Congress will act to reauthorize the program in the near future. In fact, the House Natural Resource Committee passed a bill just last week to do so, taking a major step in the right direction.

I do truly appreciate your efforts and our partnership. If you have any questions please reach out either to me your program officer.

Attachments:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Lynch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joel" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Lynch".

Joel Lynch
Chief of State and Local Assistance Programs
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