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Home > LWCF reauthorization passes the Senate

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On April 20, the Senate voted to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) within bipartisan energy reform legislation (S. 2012) sponsored by Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). Established by Congress in 1964, the LWCF supports the purchase and protection of federal public lands and waters and voluntary conservation on private lands. LWCF receives funds from offshore oil and gas leasing that it invested in securing public access, improving recreation activities, and conserving ecosystems on public lands. The LWCF has allocated more than \$3.9 billion through a matching grants program that has supported more than 40,000 projects, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, and the Forest Legacy Program. The fund temporarily lapsed last year after not being renewed in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus appropriations bill.

Before LWCF can be permanently authorized, S. 2012 must first go to conference with the House where it will most likely be merged with their version of the bill (H.R. 8), which does not include a LWCF provision.

Sources: Congress.gov, Department of the Interior, E&E News
