

FINAL BILL REPORT

HJM 4012

As Passed Legislature

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to pass legislation to restore and revitalize federal funding for the land and water conservation fund.

Sponsors: Representatives Regala, Eickmeyer, Buck, Clements, Anderson, Veloria and Conway.

House Committee on Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Environmental Quality & Water Resources

Background:

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was created in 1965 for two purposes: (1) to fund land acquisition for the four principal federal land management agencies (the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management in the Department of Interior), and (2) to provide matching funds to states for outdoor recreation projects.

Revenues for the fund are derived primarily from royalties on oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, federal outdoor recreation user fees, the federal motorboat fuel tax, and surplus property sales. Congress has authorized an annual revenue stream of \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but this amount has never been fully funded. Funds must be appropriated before they can be spent. If appropriations are not made, the revenues are spent on other programs. In recent years, no funding has gone to the state and local portion of the program.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made to permanently appropriate the fund's revenues, rather than make them subject to annual congressional appropriations. Several proposals have been introduced in the 106 Congress to provide permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and related measures.

Summary:

Washington contains a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities and many Washington residents are actively involved in outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation is also important to the state's economy. The state's population is one of the fastest growing in the United States and demand for outdoor recreation is rising.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has funded the acquisition of millions of acres of park land, water resources, wildlife habitat, and open space, and the development of 37,000 state and local projects across the nation. Washington and other states lack adequate funding for fish and wildlife protection and management, especially for species which are not hunted or fished.

Congress is petitioned to restore and revitalize federal funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to create a new dedicated fund for state level fish and wildlife management.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0

Senate 44 0 (Senate amended)

House 97 0 (House concurred)