

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

Fifty years ago, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1964 established America's most successful conservation program. The bill was designed to assure our growing population that outdoor recreation lands would be secured, on a pay-as-you-go basis, for future Americans' requirements. As we mark this anniversary and anticipate Congress acting to reauthorize this critical investment tool before it expires in September of this year, we are writing to express our strong support for LWCF and urge you to allocate robust funding to this valuable, time-tested program for the next generation in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Investments in LWCF support public land conservation and ensure access to the outdoors for all Americans, in rural communities and cities alike. It has created outdoor recreation opportunities in every state and 98 percent of counties across the country, opening up key areas for hunting, fishing, and other recreational access; supporting working forests and ranches; and acquiring inholdings and protecting critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Civil War battlefields, and other federal areas. The State and Local Grants Program provides crucial support for state and local park acquisitions in cities, counties, and rural towns as well as recreational facilities and trail corridors. It is the government's primary investment tool for ensuring that children and families have access to close-to-home recreation, having funded over 42,000 projects including sports fields, outdoor recreation facilities, and trails. The Cooperative Endangered Species grants program provides states and counties with essential resources for habitat conservation that in turn allows for appropriate economic development. And the Forest Legacy Program helps maintain critical jobs in the woods while protecting outdoor resources, recreation access, and local economies.

As you know, LWCF uses no taxpayer dollars. Instead, LWCF funds are primarily derived from oil and gas receipts paid to the federal government by energy companies that extract publicly-

owned resources from the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). Congress created LWCF as a bipartisan promise to return precious resources back to the American public by using these funds specifically for conservation and recreation purposes. Unfortunately, over the 50-year history of LWCF, over \$18 billion of these funds have been diverted from their original conservation purpose. This chronic problem has created a substantial backlog of conservation and recreation needs; has caused state, local, and federal land management agencies to postpone or cancel many important projects; and has created undue hardship for many property owners.

Despite this history of underfunding, LWCF remains the premier federal program to conserve our nation's land, water, historic, and recreation heritage. LWCF funds support an entire suite of conservation tools to address national, state, local, and regionally-driven priorities across the country. These include working lands easements that keep farmers and ranchers as stewards of the landscape that provides their livelihoods, working forest projects that keep timberlands forested and accessible and provide jobs in our rural communities, and vital recreation access projects – making public lands public – for hunting, fishing, and other activities.

As our nation continues down the path towards economic recovery, LWCF should be adequately funded to ensure that it plays the strongest possible role in revitalizing local communities. America's outdoor recreation, conservation, and preservation economies contribute \$1.06 trillion to the nation's economy each year and support 9.4 million American jobs (1 out of every 15 jobs in the U.S.). Support for public lands among the American public remains consistently and overwhelmingly strong.

We look forward to working with the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in the coming months to ensure that the suite of LWCF programs receive strong support in FY 2016 so that the federal government can maintain its commitment to conservation and recreation. As Americans continue to visit forests, parks, historic battlefields, and wildlife areas across America, we urge you to provide the funding levels necessary to ensure these opportunities exist everywhere in our great Nation.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

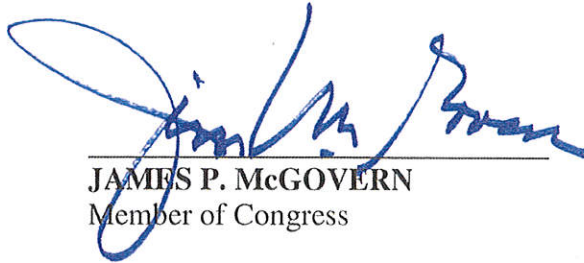
Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**MIKE THOMPSON**  
Member of Congress

  
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**PATRICK MEEHAN**  
Member of Congress

  
G. K. BUTTERFIELD  
Member of Congress

  
CHRIS GIBSON  
Member of Congress

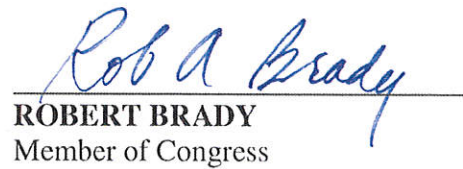
  
JAMES P. McGOVERN  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE FITZPATRICK  
Member of Congress

  
RAÚL GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress

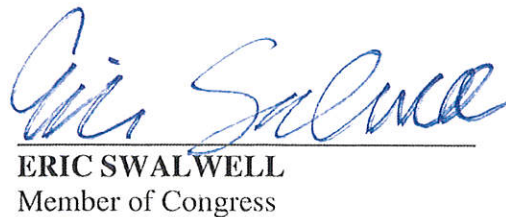
  
DAVE REICHERT  
Member of Congress

  
JARED HUFFMAN  
Member of Congress

  
ROBERT BRADY  
Member of Congress

  
ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress

  
JIM LANGEVIN  
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ERIC SWALWELL  
Member of Congress

  
ANN KIRKPATRICK  
Member of Congress



**CEDRIC RICHMOND**  
Member of Congress



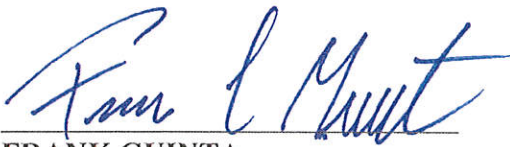
**WILLIAM KEATING**  
Member of Congress



**SUZAN DELBENE**  
Member of Congress



**RICHARD HANNA**  
Member of Congress



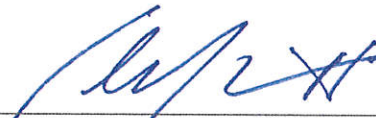
**FRANK GUINTA**  
Member of Congress



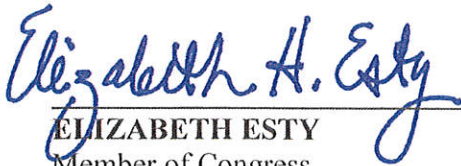
**PETER KING**  
Member of Congress



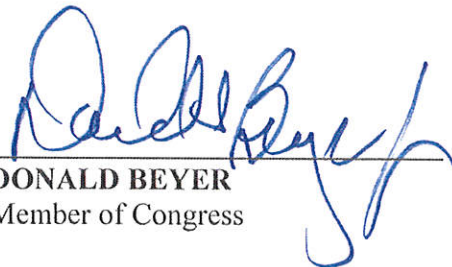
**DINA TITUS**  
Member of Congress



**JOHN YARMUTH**  
Member of Congress



**ELIZABETH ESTY**  
Member of Congress



**DONALD BEYER**  
Member of Congress



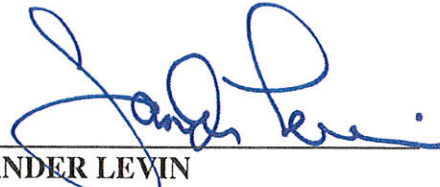
**DAN BENISHEK**  
Member of Congress



**SAM FARR**  
Member of Congress



**JIM HIMES**  
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**SANDER LEVIN**  
Member of Congress



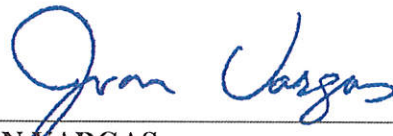
**ED PERLMUTTER**  
Member of Congress



**MICHAEL CAPUANO**  
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**CARLOS CURBELO**  
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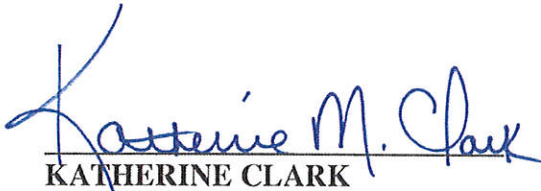
**JUAN VARGAS**  
Member of Congress



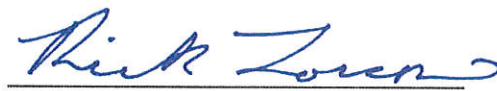
**GRACE NAPOLITANO**  
Member of Congress



**NIKI TSONGAS**  
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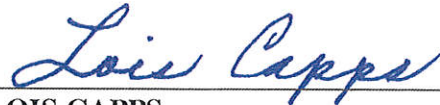
**KATHERINE CLARK**  
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**LOIS CAPPS**  
Member of Congress

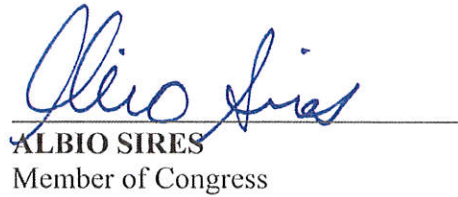
  
GERALD CONNOLLY  
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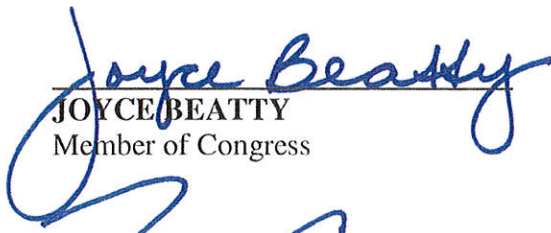
  
YVETTE CLARKE  
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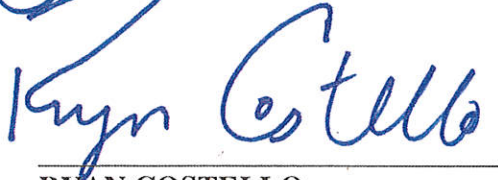
  
ADAM SCHIFF  
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**JANICE HAHN**  
Member of Congress



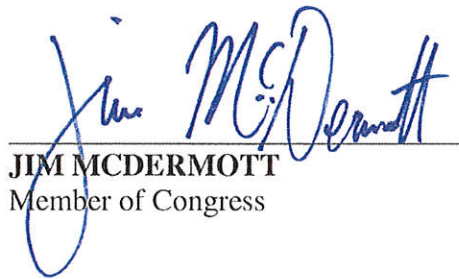
**RYAN COSTELLO**  
Member of Congress



**MARK MEADOWS**  
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**TIM WALZ**  
Member of Congress



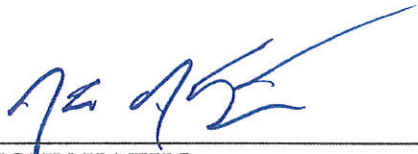
**JIM MCDERMOTT**  
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**EARL BLUMENAUER**  
Member of Congress



**SCOTT PETERS**  
Member of Congress



**JOHN KATKO**  
Member of Congress



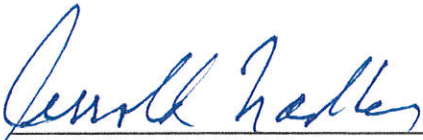
**BETO O'ROURKE**  
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**ZOE LOFGREN**  
Member of Congress



**RON KIND**  
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**JERROLD NADLER**  
Member of Congress



**DAVID CICILLINE**  
Member of Congress



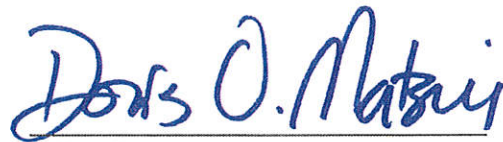
**KEITH ELLISON**  
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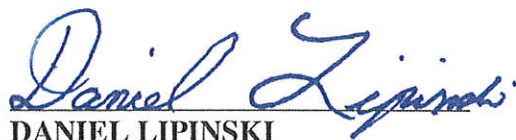
**JERRY MCNERNEY**  
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**CAROLYN MALONEY**  
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**DORIS MATSUI**  
Member of Congress



**DANIEL LIPINSKI**  
Member of Congress



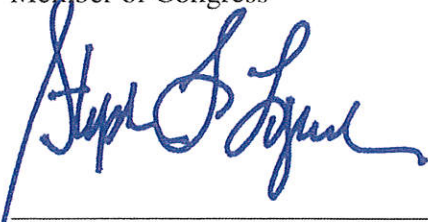
**JOE COURTNEY**  
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**DIANA DEGETTE**  
Member of Congress



**STEPHEN LYNCH**  
Member of Congress



**ROSA DELAURO**  
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**ROBERT DOLD**  
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**JOSEPH KENNEDY**  
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**MARC VEASEY**  
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**THOMAS MACARTHUR**  
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**NORMA TORRES**  
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**BRENDA LAWRENCE**  
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**MARK TAKANO**  
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**DAVID PRICE**  
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FRANK LOBIONDO  
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KURT SCHRADER  
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JOHN GARAMENDI  
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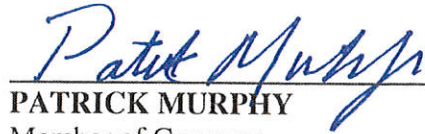
  
JOHN SARBANES  
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DONNA EDWARDS  
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TED DEUTCH  
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**JIM COSTA**  
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**RAUL RUIZ**  
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**SETH MOULTON**  
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**MATT CARTWRIGHT**  
Member of Congress



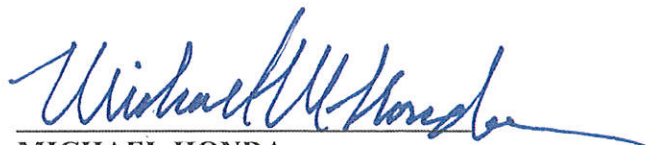
**TONY CARDENAS**  
Member of Congress



**DAVID LOEBSACK**  
Member of Congress



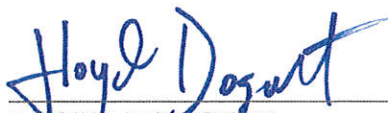
**JOHN K. DELANEY**  
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**MICHAEL HONDA**  
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**BOBBY RUSH**  
Member of Congress



**LLOYD DOGGETT**  
Member of Congress




**SANFORD BISHOP**  
Member of Congress



**JUDY CHU**  
Member of Congress



**MIKE QUIGLEY**  
Member of Congress



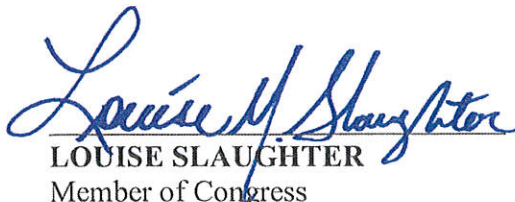
**ELIOT ENGEL**  
Member of Congress




**PAUL TONKO**  
Member of Congress



**JACKIE SPEIER**  
Member of Congress



**LOUISE SLAUGHTER**  
Member of Congress



**GENE GREEN**  
Member of Congress

*Frederica S. Wilson*

**FREDERICA WILSON**  
Member of Congress

*Mark Pocan*

**MARK POCAN**  
Member of Congress

*Mark Desaulnier*

**MARK DESAULNIER**  
Member of Congress

*John Lewis*

**JOHN LEWIS**  
Member of Congress

*Karen Bass*

**KAREN BASS**  
Member of Congress

*Denny Heck*

**DENNY HECK**  
Member of Congress

*Cheri Bustos*

**CHERI BUSTOS**  
Member of Congress

*Julia Brownley*

**JULIA BROWNLEY**  
Member of Congress

*Debbie Wasserman Schantz*

**DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ**  
Member of Congress

*Grace Meng*

**GRACE MENG**  
Member of Congress

*Jared Polis*

**JARED POLIS**  
Member of Congress

*Jeff Fortenberry*

**JEFF FORTENBERRY**  
Member of Congress

*Debbie Dingell*

**DEBBIE DINGELL**  
Member of Congress

*Bonnie Watson Coleman*

**BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN**  
Member of Congress

*David Scott*

**DAVID SCOTT**  
Member of Congress

*Filemon Vela*

**FILEMON VELA**  
Member of Congress

*Stacy E. Plaskett*

**STACY PLASKETT**  
Member of Congress

*Elise M. Stefanik*

**ELISE STEFANIK**  
Member of Congress

*Lois Frankel*

**LOIS FRANKEL**  
Member of Congress

*Bobby Scott*

**ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**  
Member of Congress

*Ruben Gallego*

**RUBEN GALLEGO**  
Member of Congress

*John C. Carney*

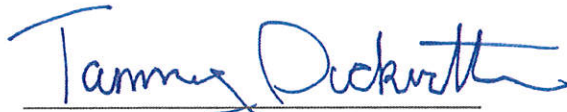
**JOHN CARNEY**  
Member of Congress

*Chaka Fattah*

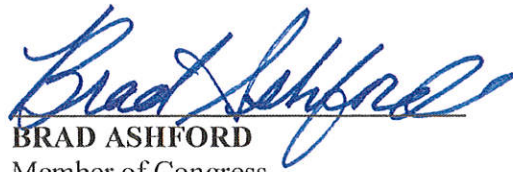
**CHAKA FATTAH**  
Member of Congress

*Rick Nolan*

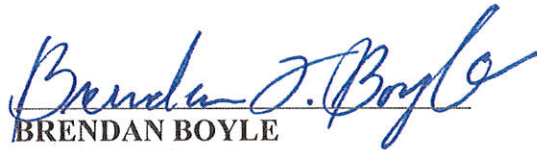
**RICK NOLAN**  
Member of Congress



**TAMMY DUCKWORTH**  
Member of Congress



**BRAD ASHFORD**  
Member of Congress



**BRENDAN BOYLE**  
Member of Congress



**JOAQUIN CASTRO**  
Member of Congress



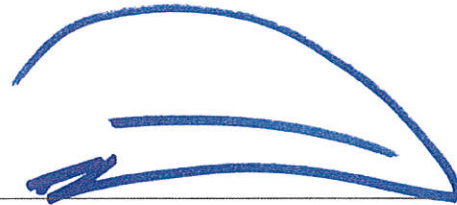
**BARBARA COMSTOCK**  
Member of Congress



**DAN KILDEE**  
Member of Congress



**RICHARD NEAL**  
Member of Congress



**SCOTT DESJARLAIS**  
Member of Congress



**TED LIEU**  
Member of Congress



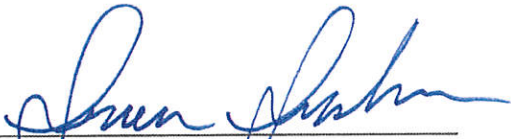
**CHRIS COLLINS**  
Member of Congress



**TERRI SEWELL**  
Member of Congress



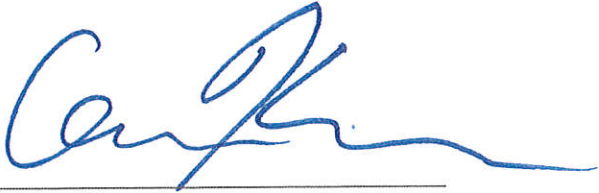
**LORETTA SANCHEZ**  
Member of Congress



**GWEN GRAHAM**  
Member of Congress



**SUSAN DAVIS**  
Member of Congress



**ADAM KINZINGER**  
Member of Congress



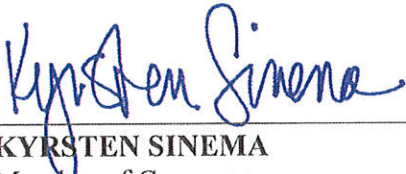
**PETE AGUILAR**  
Member of Congress



**JOSEPH CROWLEY**  
Member of Congress



**KATHLEEN RICE**  
Member of Congress



**KYRSTEN SINEMA**  
Member of Congress



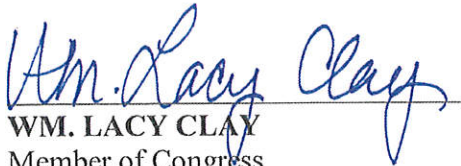
**CORRINE BROWN**  
Member of Congress



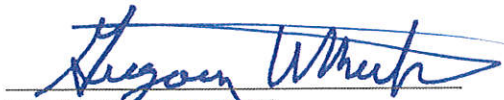
**ELIJAH CUMMINGS**  
Member of Congress



**CHRIS SMITH**  
Member of Congress



**WM. LACY CLAY**  
Member of Congress



**GREGORY MEEKS**  
Member of Congress

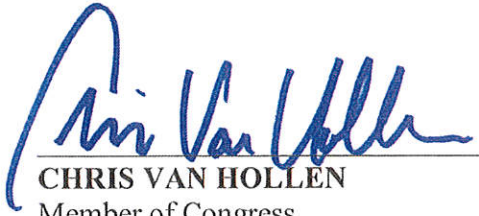




**AMI BERA**  
Member of Congress



**TULSI GABBARD**  
Member of Congress



**CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**  
Member of Congress



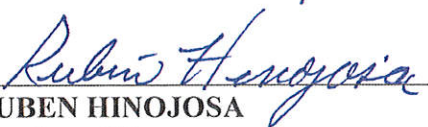
**DANNY DAVIS**  
Member of Congress



**MARK SANFORD**  
Member of Congress



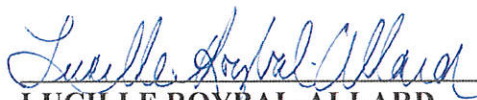
**MIKE TURNER**  
Member of Congress



**RUBEN HINOJOSA**  
Member of Congress



**LINDA SANCHEZ**  
Member of Congress



**LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**  
Member of Congress



**AL GREEN**  
Member of Congress

  
FRANK PALLONE  
Member of Congress

  
SAM GRAVES  
Member of Congress

  
MAXINE WATERS  
Member of Congress

  
ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress

  
TIM MURPHY  
Member of Congress



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JAN SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress



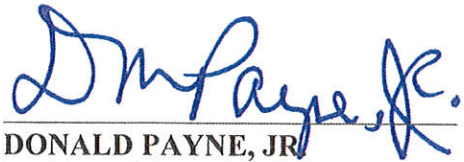
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ANDRE CARSON  
Member of Congress



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**LEE ZELDIN**  
Member of Congress



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**DONALD PAYNE, JR**  
Member of Congress