

October 22, 2020

**TO: Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation**

**RE: Federal Stimulus for States**

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is writing to ask you to quickly pass legislation providing stimulus funding that would assist state governments with their fiscal impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such funding is critical for Pennsylvania to create and sustain jobs, rebuild critical infrastructure, and keep our public lands open and accessible.

CNRAC is a legislatively mandated Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) advisory board. We are charged with reviewing conservation and natural resource policies, laws and programs of the Commonwealth and making appropriate suggestions and recommendations to the Department, the Governor and the General Assembly.

During the pandemic, visitation rates at Pennsylvania state parks and forests have skyrocketed, with more than a million additional visitors per month. Pennsylvania's citizens are utilizing state parks to maintain their mental and physical health which are more important now than ever. DCNR staff are working tirelessly to provide a quality experience to first-time and long-time visitors within a limited budget and with infrastructure needs across state parks and forests exceeding \$1 billion. With the significant increase in visitors, daily and short-term maintenance costs have also increased.

In addition, many of Pennsylvania's small and rural communities rely on outdoor recreation and tourism through our state parks and forests to support their economies and have been helped by the substantial increase in visitation to our public parks, forests and trails. Without Federal stimulus monies to help to close our state budget gaps, it is likely that DCNR will be forced to close some of the facilities that Pennsylvanians and businesses have relied on to get them through this pandemic. This closure would have a detrimental impact on Pennsylvania's \$29 billion outdoor economy and the 251,000 jobs it supports.

During this unprecedented crisis, we urge you to assist our states with much needed funding to support our citizens and businesses and to make the passage of the needed legislation your highest priority.

Sincerely,



Gerilyn Umstead-Singer, CNRAC Chair

cc: Governor Tom Wolf  
Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, DCNR