January 24, 2020

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of our respective organizations, we write to acknowledge your Department’s leadership on implementing the now-permanently reauthorized Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), and we express our support for fully implementing it as soon as possible. FLTFA is a critical western lands program that—once implemented—will facilitate modified land exchanges to protect our nation’s special places and increase public access and recreation. As you update the program under the new law, we strongly encourage you to look for ways to increase the efficiency of the program, including by delegating authority for land acquisition decisions.

FLTFA is a common-sense public lands tool that achieves economic and conservation goals with broad bipartisan support across the West. Originally authorized in 2000, FLTFA expired in 2011 and was permanently reauthorized in 2018 (P.L. 106-248). FLTFA facilitates strategic federal land sales by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to provide funding for high-priority land conservation within or adjacent to federal lands in the eleven contiguous western states and Alaska. Under FLTFA, the revenue generated from BLM land sales must be deposited into the Federal Land Disposal Account, as opposed to the U.S. Treasury, to allow BLM, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to pursue land conservation projects that increase public access for outdoor recreation, hunting, and fishing; conserve wildlife habitat; protect water quality; and preserve historic and cultural resources. Furthermore, BLM will have additional funding to conduct sales and other administrative real estate work, increasing staff capacity. Once fully operational, these FLTFA land sales and acquisitions will again provide a critical tool for consolidating private and public land ownership, allowing for more efficient land management and expanded business operations.

While FLTFA is now permanently reauthorized, it is not yet operational. For that to happen, the BLM—working with its partner agencies—must fully implement the law, beginning with finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between these agencies. The updates to the MOU must recognize the new provisions in the law that make certain recreation and other lands eligible under FLTFA, among other changes. In addition, we respectfully request that you work with the agencies to make the program more efficient, including delegating signature authority for land acquisition decisions to below the Secretary’s office, to at least agency heads or division chiefs.

Thank you for prioritizing the implementation of FLTFA and we look forward to continuing to work with you to bring back this tool to improve public and private lands
management, public access and recreation opportunities and conservation across the West.

Sincerely,

Access Fund
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Public Land Exchange
American Sportfishing Association
American Woodcock Society
Angler Action Foundation
Archery Trade Association
Arizona Trail Association
Backcountry Horseman of Washington
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
California Waterfowl Association
Californians for Western Wilderness
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Lands Foundation
Delta Waterfowl
Endangered Habitats League
Fly Fishers International
Grand Teton National Park Foundation
Henry's Fork Foundation
Houston Safari Club
Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts
Izaak Walton League of America
Land Trust Alliance
Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Deer Alliance
National Parks Conservation Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
Nevada Land Trust
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Pope & Young Club
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The North American Grouse Partnership
The Public Lands Foundation
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Western Landowners Alliance
Western Rivers Conservancy
Wilderness Land Trust
Wildlife Mississippi