

October 28, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman,
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski,
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Support the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to support the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009, S. 1442. We, the undersigned organizations, represent members of the education, environmental, service, preservationist, recreation, Indian, Latino and business communities. The Public Lands Service Corps Act would help restore our Nation's natural and cultural resources by increasing service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands.

A modernized Public Lands Service Corps would improve opportunities for youth and young adults, particularly those from underserved communities, to gain valuable job skills and spend time working outdoors while providing much-needed services on our Nation's public lands. The bill would also lay the groundwork for a new and diverse generation of public land visitors and managers.

S. 1442 would expand opportunities for young people to spend time outdoors. On average, American teenagers are spending about two and half hours per day watching television or surfing the internet and only six minutes each day engaged in outdoor activities. Contact with nature has been shown to improve academic and behavioral performance. Time outside has also been found to alleviate symptoms of attention deficit disorders, decrease stress levels among youth and improve vision. Youth who get outside and limit their screen time are also more physically fit than their peers.

The Public Lands Service Corps Act would prepare youth and young adults for green jobs. As our nation moves towards a green economy, with more than half of the near future job growth coming from Environmental-Related Occupations, according to a recent projection by the White House Council of Economic Advisors, it is critical that we provide young people with the training they need to fully participate in the 21st Century workforce. Not only does S. 1442 provide entry-level employment opportunities and job training for youth and young adults, service to the Corps will better qualify participants for future careers in public land management.

S. 1442 would also authorize activities that would improve infrastructure, restore our public lands, encourage cultural and historical research, improve the health of coastal, marine and

estuarine ecosystems, address climate change and assist with scientific data collection. Furthermore, the Public Lands Service Corps Act will instill in a new generation an appreciation for natural and cultural resource stewardship and public service.

Therefore, we urge you to vote in favor of the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009. If you need additional information, please contact Jacqueline Ostfeld, Sierra Club's National Youth Representative, at 202-548-6584 or Jackie.Ostfeld@SierraClub.org.

Sincerely,

National and Regional Organizations

American Camp Association
American Recreation Coalition
Center for Desert Archaeology
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees
The Corps Network
Green For All
Hispanic Federation
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, LCLAA
National Education Association
National Indian Youth Leadership Project
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
National Park Hospitality Association
National Park Trust
National Parks Conservation Association
National Puerto Rican Coalition
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
NatureBridge
Partnership for the National Trails System
The Outdoor Foundation
Outdoor Industry Association
REI
Sierra Club
Southwest Conservation Corps
Student Conservation Association
The Wilderness Society

State and Local Organizations

Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (New Mexico)
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago (Illinois)
The Coalition for the Northeast Ecological Corridor (Puerto Rico)
Florida Wildlife Federation (Florida)
Fresno Local Conservation Corps (California)
Girl Scouts of Northern California (California)
Hands Across Cultures (New Mexico)

Los Angeles Conservation Corps (California)
Muddy Sneakers: The Joy of Learning Outside (North Carolina)
Minnesota Conservation Corps (Minnesota)
North Cascades Institute (Washington)
O'Neill Sea Odyssey (California)
River Source (New Mexico)
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (New Mexico)
Southwest Alaska Guidance Association (Alaska)
Southwest Youth Services (New Mexico)
Talking Talons (New Mexico)
Vecinos del Rio (New Mexico)
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (Vermont)
Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Washington)
The Wellness Coalition Youth Corps (New Mexico)
Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative (California)