



**COUNCIL for
CITIZENS
AGAINST
GOVERNMENT
WASTE**

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U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

You will soon consider, H.R. 1957, the Great American Outdoors Act. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I urge you to oppose this legislation.

The federal government [controls](#) approximately 640 million acres, or roughly one-third, of land in the U.S., including around 111 million acres for 803 wilderness designated areas. In attempting to maintain this massive amount of land, the federal government's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has become severely overleveraged, holding a \$21 billion maintenance backlog, \$12 billion of which is needed to address the National Park Service alone.

While H.R. 1957 attempts to deal with this problem, it would only exacerbate an already strenuous fiscal situation for the LWCF. This legislation would redirect funds from the Treasury's General Fund to tackle the backlog, but in doing so, would convert funding for the LWCF from discretionary to mandatory spending and direct a significant portion of this money to buy even more federal land. This is counterproductive to the goal of the legislation and only adds more pressure long term to the multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog. According to the Congressional Budget Office, H.R. 1957 [would](#) annually allocate \$900 million in mandatory spending to the LWCF from fiscal year 2020-2030 and total spending would reach more than \$17 billion.

Alarming, amendments that would have resolved the backlog and upheld fiscal responsibility will not even be considered. One such amendment, proposed by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), would have provided permanent offsets through increased user fees for national parks. This would have fully covered the costs of fixing the LWCF's massive maintenance backlog without adding to the national debt. Unfortunately, Sen. Enzi's amendment and others will not receive the votes they deserve.

H.R. 1957 does little to protect and preserve federal lands, fails to fix the LWCF's maintenance backlog, and adds billions to the national debt. This legislation is equally concerning for both the future of the national parks and the pocketbooks of taxpayers. Again, I urge you to oppose this legislation. All votes on H.R. 1957 may be among those considered for CCAGW's *2020 Congressional Ratings*.

Sincerely,

Thomas Schatz