CLOSE-TO-HOME PARKS
CREATING JOBS, SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND EXPANDING EQUITY

During the Corona virus pandemic, access to parks has never been more important, becoming a vital place to get outside, exercise, get fresh air, and a respite from anxiety. As Congress determines how best to provide economic relief at this time of crisis, there is an opportunity to create jobs, invest in the hardest hit communities, and ensure every American has access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of their home. If we maximize the opportunities for all people to experience the physical, mental, and social benefits of nature then every community—regardless of race, income or zip code—will be stronger, healthier, and more resilient for generations to come.

**We are asking Congress to include a one-time investment of $500 million for close-to-home parks in any future coronavirus stimulus bill.**

By renovating and investing in our community parks, playgrounds, trails and green spaces through the Outdoor Legacy Partnership Program these funds could preserve up to 100,000 local seasonal jobs, provide at least 8,000 new jobs, and/or renovate more than 500 sites, all while adding $1.37 billion in economic activity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted state and local budgets, resulting in **56% of parks and recreation agencies facing significant reductions to the current fiscal year’s operations spending.** Nationwide, local parks have an estimated $60 billion deferred maintenance backlog.

**THE POWER OF PARKS**

**Economic Benefits:**
- Parks create jobs and spur private investment. Parks and recreation spending on operations creates 23 jobs for every million dollars and 16 jobs for every million dollars spent on capital improvements.
- Parks are drivers of local economies. In 2017 alone, local parks and recreation agencies generated $166 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1.1 million jobs nationwide.

**Health Benefits:**
- Increased government spending on parks and recreation operations is associated with decreased mortality.
- People exercise more if they have access to parks and other safe outdoor places. Physical activity can reduce a variety of mental health conditions including anxiety and depression and can help manage other chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

**Environmental Benefits:**
- Parks improve resilience to flooding, manage stormwater, absorb air pollution, and filter rainwater keeping rivers and lakes cleaner.
- Parks help reduce air temperature caused by “urban heat island effect,” and tree cover provides much needed shade.

For more information please contact: Alex Schaefer at The Trust for Public Land