



October 2018

Dear land trust board member:

***We are stronger together.*** I've long believed this mantra – and your land trust has affirmed the accuracy of my belief on countless occasions since I joined the Land Trust Alliance two years ago. Time and again, I've seen firsthand how our organizations complement each other and advance our shared passion for private land conservation in America. The Alliance represents your interests and presents a unified voice for land conservation at the national level, all while your work – and the work of 1,000 other land trusts that are members of the Alliance – provides tremendous benefits to local communities across the country. Thank you for your commitment to conservation and for your partnership with the Alliance.

In this spirit of continued collaboration, I write to share a number of items of consequence and interest to you. If I were able to be with you in person at your next board meeting, these are some of the items I would take a few moments to discuss:

- **Farm Bill:** The Alliance is committed to securing a Farm Bill that streamlines existing conservation programs, ensures that greater acreage is protected and, most importantly, secures \$500 million a year for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (on which many land trusts rely for land conservation funding). Thanks in no small part to recent Capitol Hill advocacy by land trust representatives, both the House and Senate bills provide for the majority of our priorities. The House version delivers our recommended funding for the Agricultural Land Easement program; the Senate version calls for initial funding of \$400 million annually. Unfortunately, on September 30, 2018, the Farm Bill expired. As the Conference Committee process continues, we will work with Congress and critical partner organizations throughout the process to underscore the importance of easement programs that keep working lands working and directly contribute to our economy. Every day we lack a new Farm Bill is another day we stand to lose another farm or ranch. Congress must act now. For the latest updates, and information about how you can help, visit [www.lta.org/farm-bill](http://www.lta.org/farm-bill).
- **Tax shelters:** The Alliance and its members are working diligently on Capitol Hill to shut down abusive tax shelters that offer investors a fast profit by exploiting federal tax incentives for conservation easement donations. We fully support the Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act (H.R. 4459 and S. 2436), which will remedy this urgent problem. If passed by Congress, these bipartisan bills will continue to reward honest philanthropy while shutting down abuse. Visit [www.lta.org/hr-4459-s-2436](http://www.lta.org/hr-4459-s-2436) to learn more and how you can help.
- **Relevance Campaign:** To counter the long-term threat of public apathy and disinterest in land conservation, the Alliance is developing a nationwide public engagement campaign to elevate the importance of land conservation as a priority in every community. We hope to launch the campaign in 2020. An overview of this initiative is available in our strategic plan at [www.lta.org/strategic-plan](http://www.lta.org/strategic-plan); I look forward to sharing more with you about this “call-to-action” campaign as it develops.

- **Land and Climate Program:** If your land trust is seeking strategies, training and tools to both adapt to and mitigate climate change in your land conservation work, communicate about your climate work with your community or tap new sources of climate change funding, know that we offer a wide variety of resources. You can access these through our Land and Climate Program, [www.lta.org/climatechange](http://www.lta.org/climatechange), and our Conservation in a Changing Climate site, [climatechange.lta.org](http://climatechange.lta.org). Regardless of where you, your fellow board members, your land trust's staff and your community stand on this issue, we have resources to encourage meaningful discussion and plan achievable goals.
- **Rally:** The nation's largest annual gathering of land conservation professionals will be held Oct. 11-13 in Pittsburgh. Rally offers an opportunity to network with your colleagues, advance your skills and work to solve some of your greatest professional challenges. Learn more about Rally at [www.AllianceRally.org](http://www.AllianceRally.org).
- **Member resources:** Finally, I want to remind you that your membership in the Alliance comes with many benefits, including an array of free services. Our newest benefit helps your land trust build relationships with local media. Feel free to request from us a complimentary "media list" of reporters in your region. See other benefits at [www.lta.org/membership](http://www.lta.org/membership).

I regret that I cannot present these items to you in person. However, my colleagues and I are happy to address for you any lingering questions or concerns.

Again, ***we are stronger together***. The Alliance was formed 36 years ago by local land trusts, born out of the community's expressed desire to advance private land conservation, develop a sense of community identity, increase the capacity of all land trusts and share resources. The Alliance proudly serves the critical roles of facilitating learning and exchanging information across the community – all while leading on issues that no single land trust could fully address.

I look forward to all we will continue to accomplish together.

Sincerely yours,



Andrew Bowman  
President  
Land Trust Alliance