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**By Rep. Charles F. Bass (R-N.H.)**  
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If you have ever hiked one of the mountains in the Presidential Range in New Hampshire's White Mountains and seen the majestic views of the national forest from the top of the peak, you know firsthand the beauty and resources that we are fortunate to have in the Granite State.

I am proud to represent a state that offers a little bit of everything for the nature lover: mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, and beaches, all within a short drive from anywhere in the state, and all offering a multitude of opportunities for fishing, hunting, bird-watching, hiking, skiing, boating, swimming, and scenic drives. New Hampshire's environment also provides my state with the sustainable resources it needs to fill its sawmills and fuel the clean biomass power generation plants that provide thousands of residents and businesses with electricity.

These natural resources are treasures to be shared and preserved for future generations, and why I have long been a supporter of conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Community Forest Program (CFP). These programs provide the opportunity to protect working forests for multiple uses and are vital to protecting our nation's natural treasures. LWCF and CFP have already made an impact on projects in my home state such as the Newfound Pathway at Newfound Lake and the Randolph Community Forest.

Conservation has an added benefit: economic growth. New Hampshire's natural resources play an important role in our state's economic well-being. The forest products and tourism industries support thousands of jobs from the North Country to the Seacoast. In fact, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, the active outdoor recreation industry alone helps to support more than 50,000 jobs in New Hampshire and more than 6.5 million jobs nationwide, with an annual contribution of \$730 billion to the U.S. economy.

Given the tremendous impact conservation has on our economy, we need to ensure we adequately fund these programs during the appropriations process so ongoing conservation projects can continue. That's why I have spearheaded several bipartisan letters to the House Appropriations Committee to stress the importance of these programs to our environment and our economy. These efforts have garnered support from more than 150 members from across the country representing a diverse group of interests and constituencies. The uniting force is an understanding that ensuring our land is available for future generations must be done and can be done in a fiscally-responsible manner.

Not only do our natural resources boost our economy, we can also look to them as a means to achieve energy independence. Alternative sources of energy such as solar, wind, and biomass, for example, will help to diversify our nation's energy portfolio and keep energy costs down. Developing these resources in combination with pursuing a smart energy plan that also focuses on reducing energy demand will ensure our nation's energy security and independence.

That's why I recently introduced the bipartisan Smart Energy Act, which sets forth a strategic plan to help put the federal government and many businesses on a path to reduce energy use. Improving our energy efficiency is the quickest, cleanest, and cheapest way to meet our energy needs, particularly in this time of economic recovery.

For example, a provision in my Smart Energy Act would establish a plan to double the production of electricity through the use of combined heat and power technology (CHP) and waste heat recovery by 2020. What's great about this technology is that it maximizes energy already created for both its thermal and electric generation capabilities, providing a clean, efficient source of energy. These technologies are already used by several companies across New Hampshire like Velcro USA and the Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center to power and heat their facilities. Even parts of downtown Concord, the state capital, utilize CHP to keep workers warm in brutal New Hampshire winters.

Our environment and our economy go hand in hand. New Hampshire has found that right balance of stewardship and economic growth, thanks to conservation programs like LWCF and CFP, smart management of its forests for multiple uses, and the responsible use of renewable energy sources.

As I take a walk outside in my backyard, with Mount Monadnock in the distance, I think of how fortunate I am to have these natural treasures in my home state, and why we need to be responsible stewards of our environment. I want New Hampshire's children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy them for years to come.

*Rep. Bass (R-N.H.) is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.*