Congress has a unique opportunity to enact legislation this year that would make great strides in protecting our public lands and waterways while delivering needed reforms to enhance the outdoor recreation experience.

The outdoor recreation economy accounts for 2.2 percent of the U.S. GDP, producing $734 billion in economic output and supporting 4.5 million direct jobs. The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), a coalition of America’s leading recreation trade associations, requests lawmakers take action to keep the economic engine of the outdoor economy running at full speed.

1 LANDS PACKAGE

The following bills are bipartisan, bicameral, and many have already had a positive hearing or markup in one or both chambers. These vital pieces of legislation share the support of our industry sectors and the broader recreation community and are ripe for inclusion in an outdoor recreation legislative package.

1. **RESTORE OUR PARKS ACT (S.3172, H.R.6510)**

Growing deferred maintenance, increased visitation and lack of sufficient appropriations have affected recreation and the local communities that rely on recreation visitors. More than $1 billion of the $11.6 billion backlog in our National Parks is on recreation assets such as trails, campgrounds and marinas. While the National Park Service holds the largest share of the overall $18 billion backlog, all four major land management agencies face mounting deferred maintenance backlogs that negatively impact outdoor recreation and the associated economic benefits. When Americans and international visitors come to recreate on our public lands, they should be awed by the natural beauty of the great outdoors—not disappointed with the recreation infrastructure that supports runners, hikers, bikers, climbers, anglers, campers, boaters, RVers, snowmobilers, off-road vehicle riders and more. This bipartisan legislation is supported by the administration and offers a thoughtful solution to this growing problem that, without swift action, will continue to have a negative impact on our nation’s iconic recreation assets and the hundreds of millions of outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy them each year.

2. **RECREATION NOT RED-TAPE ACT (S.1633, H.R.3400)**

As outdoor recreation grows in popularity and in economic impact, land management agencies need updated tools to protect and improve access to America’s public lands and waters. The RNR Act offers sensible, non-controversial proposals for identifying and appropriately managing important places for sustainable outdoor recreation across the country. If passed, this bipartisan and bicameral bill will update processes and policies on our national public lands and waters to improve the outdoor recreation experience for all forms of outdoor recreation.
MODERN FISH ACT (S.1520, H.R.2023)
For too long, the federal fisheries management system has limited access for America’s recreational anglers and boaters due to faulty data and misguided regulations. The Modern Fish Act would grant recreational anglers greater access to saltwater fisheries, modernize the data collection methods that inform the regulatory framework and enhance conservation efforts. This combined impact will give the recreational fishing and boating industry the room it needs to grow and continue to succeed, while ensuring the long-term vitality of our federal fishery resources.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING ACT (S.569, H.R.6759)
Permanent reauthorization and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Congress allowed a 50-year conservation legacy to expire on September 30. The LWCF has funded recreation access projects across the country and is one of the most widely supported tools to conserve and protect America’s outdoor heritage. LWCF has supported recreation access projects in almost every county in the country, and our member businesses and customers need certainty that this program will be around in the future to support the growing outdoor recreation economy.

21st CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS ACT (S.1403, H.R.2987)
The 21CSC is a bold national initiative to annually engage 100,000 young adults and veterans in service on public lands throughout the country. 21CSC organizations are grounded in the community; they leverage private funds, spur local economic development and support the outdoor recreation economy, all while helping young adults and veterans obtain in-demand skills for the growing recreation, natural resource and restoration economies.

EVERY KID OUTDOORS ACT (S.1522, H.R.3186)
Our public lands are some of the best venues for children to experience the outdoors and participate in healthy outdoor recreation. This legislation will provide all fourth graders with free access to public lands and waters. These students can request an annual pass, which will allow them to have free access for themselves and up to three adults accompanying them, expanding the opportunity for children and their families to begin to experience and appreciate our iconic public lands and waters.
PUBLIC LANDS RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVEMENT ACT (S.2335) & THE GUIDES AND OUTFITTERS (GO) ACT (VERSION AS CONTAINED IN H.R.3400)
This bipartisan legislation, passed by the House Natural Resources Committee, improves the outfitter and guide permitting systems of the federal land agencies to help more Americans gain access to the outdoors and share in the legacy of America’s public lands through facilitated outdoor recreation experiences. PLROIA will positively impact a wide range of organizations that deliver facilitated outdoor recreation, including for-profit outfitters and guides, non-profit outfitters and guides, university recreation programs and volunteer-based clubs. PLROIA is supported by members of the outdoor industry and the conservation community.

TARGET PRACTICE & MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING SUPPORT ACT (S. 593)
This bipartisan legislation amends the Pittman-Robertson Trust Fund formula to give state fish and wildlife agencies more flexibility to use the excise tax dollars for construction and maintenance of public shooting ranges.

HELP FOR WILDLIFE ACT (S.1514)
Bipartisan legislation that established several important government conservation programs and reauthorizes existing wildlife legislation. This bill also provides for regulatory clarity for sportsmen and supports building and expansion of public target ranges, restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay Program and commonsense conservation policies.

SPORTSMEN’S ACT (S. 733)
A bipartisan legislative package that expands and enhances sportsmen’s access by making federal lands presumptively “open unless closed” for fishing, hunting, recreational shooting and other outdoor activities. This legislation provides new opportunities for Americans to enjoy our public lands and instructs federal agencies to expand and enhance access for recreation.

RTP FULL FUNDING ACT (S. 3604)
Bipartisan legislation that requires a study to determine the best available estimate of the total amount of off-highway recreation fuel taxes paid into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is currently funded through the HTF at $85 million annually. This is only a portion of the $270 million annually that the Federal Highway Administration conservatively estimates motorized trail users pay into the HTF through fuel taxes for use in non-highway recreation. RTP is a user-pay, user-benefit program that benefits all recreationists and serves as the primary funding mechanism for thousands of motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities. This legislation would provide authorizing committees with an accurate assessment of what trail users pay into HTF and help inform Congress in continuing to authorize the program.
FARM BILL
The Farm Bill is critically important to the outdoor recreation industry. ORR urges Congress to reauthorize the Farm Bill during the lame duck and incorporate the following clarifications to existing authorities that would have a very meaningful impact on the outdoor recreation economy.

1 OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY IN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT TITLE
Add a new Section 6122: Outdoor Recreation Economic and Community Development
In the case of any program under this title, the Secretary shall consider applications for projects that support the outdoor recreation economy, including investments in outdoor recreation-related businesses, facilities, infrastructure, strategic planning, market access and marketing. Programs may support financial assistance or technical assistance and training. Projects must be carried out in a rural area and must meet the applicable eligibility requirements of this title.

2 CONNECTING RESTORATION AND RECREATION IN THE FORESTRY TITLE
Add a new Section 8626: Consideration of Sustainable Recreation Infrastructure and Access
To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall consider opportunities to restore sustainable recreational infrastructure or access, or to accomplish other recreation outcomes, when designing restoration projects under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 or under other Forest Service authorities, where such opportunities are compatible with the primary restoration purpose(s) of the project.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
In September, the Bureau of Economic Analysis’ Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) issued its first-ever final report on the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry. The report found that this sector had a U.S. GDP contribution of 2.2 percent and an economic output of $734 billion in 2016, which is greater than other key economic sectors such as the mining, utilities and chemical products manufacturing. With 4.5 million jobs, the outdoor recreation sector generates similar employment as other major job creators in the United States, including hospitals, transportation and warehousing, and educational services. To help policy makers make informed decisions, ORR is asking Congress to include $1.5 million in funding in FY2019 to take ORSA to the next level, including the development of state data, which will truly capture the scope and impact of the outdoor recreation industry.