



September 21, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

On behalf of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, we wanted to strongly encourage your committee to advance an Outdoor Recreation Package that includes the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act, the Ski Hill Resources for Economic Development (SHRED) Act, the Modernizing Access to Public Land Act (MAPLand Act), among other bipartisan and pragmatic outdoor recreation legislation. The industry is feeling a sense of urgency behind moving these important bills that would help manage already existing conserved lands and waters in order to support businesses recovering from COVID-19, and now impacted by wildfires and drought, ensure better access to the outdoors for all Americans, mitigate the impacts of climate change and ever-increasing visitation in some areas on the outdoor experience and create jobs by supporting rural economies and communities.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations – made up of 34 national members — as well as other nonprofit organizations and business entities — serving more than 110,000 businesses. According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis released last year, the recreation industry generated \$788 billion in economic output, accounted for 2.1 percent of GDP and 5.2 million American jobs, and was growing faster than the economy in every indicator. ORR member organizations appreciate your bipartisan commitment to advancing important outdoor recreation policy that provides greater opportunity for everyone to access the outdoors while also strengthening the outdoor recreation economy.

The SOAR Act will help streamline the permitting process on public lands, which would be a significant help to guides and outfitters that have been burdened by a complex, costly, and duplicative permitting process that too often does not authorize new permits. The SOAR Act also eliminates unnecessary duplication through inter-agency coordination and encourages land managers to account for recreation in planning efforts. Additionally, streamlining permitting processes through the SOAR Act will provide targeted relief to these small businesses suffering greatly from necessary COVID-19 restrictions, and need of additional assistance due to record wildfires and drought affecting much of the country.

The SHRED Act will ensure that a portion of ski area permitting fees collected on U.S. Forest Service lands will be used for local infrastructure improvements instead of simply sending these fees to the Treasury. This legislation will help make needed investments in our National

Forests and will significantly benefit outdoor recreation and local economies as seasonal recreation timeframes become less consistent due to the impacts of snowfall and drought.

The MAPLand Act will benefit outdoor recreation by providing federal land management agencies with funding to digitize mapping information making access to public lands easier while ensuring that people exploring the outdoors are better informed and have updated information on access and regulations, including data on areas that might be impacted by fire, drought or flooding.

These bipartisan bills modernize antiquated systems within the federal government that have created unnecessary barriers to accessing the outdoors. Additionally, they provide relief for small businesses and communities attempting to rebound from COVID-19 while dealing with seasons of severe wildfires, flooding and drought. Combining SOAR, SHRED, and MAPLand, (as well as other bills like full funding for the Recreational Trails Program and additional interpretive services and real-time data to help with overcrowding and visitation), into a first-ever Recreation Package would move our federal land management agencies into the twenty-first century, support rural and urban economies, provide relief for businesses hit by COVID and climate impacts, and help new and diverse users identify, protect, and access recreation opportunities on our shared public lands and waters. This would truly be a legacy achievement for the committee and the recreation economy across the country.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to advance a Recreation Package through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

America Outdoors
American Horse Council
American Mountain Guides Association
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Association of Marina Industries
CHM Government Services
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds
National Forest Recreation Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Park Hospitality Association
National RV Dealers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Outdoor Industry Association
PeopleForBikes
Professional TrailBuilders Association
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
RV Industry Association
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals

Specialty Equipment Market Association
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Sports and Fitness Industry Association
The Corps Network