



February 15, 2022

The Honorable Mike Thompson
Chairman
Ways and Means Committee
Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly
Ranking Member
Ways and Means Committee
Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Kelly,

On behalf of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable and our 35 national association members, we would like to thank you for convening this important hearing on the impact of federal infrastructure investment. We have been appreciative of Congress' continued commitment to investing in infrastructure that enhances outdoor recreation and the many rural communities that strongly benefit the outdoor recreation economy. Thanks to legislation including the Great American Outdoors Act passed in the last Congress and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed in this Congress, people are having better experiences in the outdoors and the outdoor recreation economy is rapidly growing.

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation entities representing more than 110,000 American outdoor businesses and the full spectrum of outdoor activities. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the recreation industry generated \$689 billion in economic output, accounted for 1.8 percent of GDP, and 4.3 million American jobs in 2020, despite industry slowdowns and access restrictions caused by COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, outdoor recreation was growing faster than the economy as a whole.

Investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure have wide-ranging benefits for the United States. When infrastructure investments are made on public lands and waters, recreational trails, rural communities, and campgrounds, we can better meet the growing demand Americans have for the outdoors and ensure that everyone has a quality and safe outdoor experience. When Americans participate in outdoor recreation, they purchase gear, equipment, food, and lodging, while also contributing tens of billions of dollars in federal taxes. Outdoor infrastructure is a worthy investment as studies have confirmed that for every dollar Congress invests in the National Park Service, for example, \$10 is returned to the U.S. economy. And it's not just good economics—outdoor recreation opportunities also provide significant improvements to public health and community vitality. Since the start of the pandemic, these impacts have been magnified as Americans continue to seek outdoor recreation opportunities around the country. As a result, outdoor recreation sales and participation numbers have broken records, and these trends show no sign of letting up.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) understands these benefits and makes meaningful investments in transportation, public lands, rural development, and natural infrastructure to connect

more people to the outdoors. We appreciate the work of this committee and your colleagues on other committees that have prioritized investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure. We are especially appreciative of the IJA provisions related to outdoor recreation, which include:

- \$100 million for restoring, preparing, or adapting recreation sites on federal land
- Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund
- Investment in natural infrastructure
- Forest Service Legacy Road and Trail Program

These investments will complement the historic allocations provided by the Great American Outdoors Act to address deferred maintenance needs and provide sustainable, accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans.

ORR members are committed to working with this committee and the administration to ensure that infrastructure investments are appropriately allocated to spur growth within the outdoor recreation economy, especially in rural communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Wahl Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jessica Wahl Turner
President
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable