



May 3, 2022

Dear Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), we want to thank you for today's markup on America's Outdoor Recreation Act of 2022, which unifies previously introduced legislation including the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act, Recreation Not Red Tape (RNR) Act, Biking on Long-distance Trails (BOLT) Act, Outdoor Recreation Act, and other impactful provisions into a bipartisan and pragmatic outdoor recreation legislative package. This markup is yet another reminder of how the outdoors brings people together and continues to be championed by leaders on both sides of the aisle. At ORR, we appreciate this committee's focus on policies needed to protect our lands and waters while also strengthening the recreation economy, creating new opportunities through rural development, and ensuring outdoor recreation is accessible to everyone.

This bill, if enacted, would help manage already 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 ever-increasing visitation in some areas and create jobs by supporting rural economies, communities, and quality of life.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations – made up of 35 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 \$689 billion in economic output, accounted for 1.8 percent of GDP and 4.3 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.

Included language on special recreation permits and fees and their administration, cost recovery reform, and multijurisdictional trips from 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. This will help eliminate unnecessary duplication through inter-agency coordination and encourages land managers to account for recreation in planning efforts. Additionally, streamlining permitting processes will provide targeted relief to those small businesses suffering greatly from necessary COVID-19 restrictions and in need of additional assistance due to record wildfires and drought affecting much of the country.

The America's Outdoor Recreation Act of 2022 also includes diverse and impactful provisions from the bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Act to help improve the recreation experience for the public. One provision we are particularly excited about is Section 133 on Gateway Communities, which directs both the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to work with state and local governments, housing authorities, trade associations, and nonprofits to identify needs and economic impacts in gateway communities. These partnerships will help ensure that widespread interest in

outdoor recreation benefits locals and visitors alike in some of our most cherished outdoor recreation destinations. Along with improvements to broadband internet connectivity, travel management, and public-private partnerships, these provisions will help maximize bandwidth at federal agencies to support and sustain high quality recreation experiences around the United States.

Finally, provisions from Recreation Not Red Tape enabling online fee collection and pass purchases, extension of seasonal recreation opportunities, and access for servicemembers and veterans will bring recreation access on federal public lands and waters into the 21st century and ensure that Americans are not held back from visiting their favorite places by antiquated systems within the federal government. Along with new reporting on special recreation permits for underserved communities, this legislation helps ensure that all Americans, no matter their background, have the opportunity to enjoy our public lands and waters.

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 repeated seasons of severe wildfires, flooding, and drought. The America's Outdoor Recreation Act of 2022 would move our federal land management agencies into the 21st 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 today's markup and look forward to working with you to advance this bill through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jessica Turner".

Jessica Turner
President