



January 4, 2023

The Honorable Bill Lee
Governor of Tennessee
State Capitol, 1st Floor
600 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee,

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) – the nation’s leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations and organizations representing the \$862 billion outdoor recreation economy – writes to share good news from a new report about Tennessee’s outdoor recreation economy and suggest further strategies to leverage outdoor recreation for the state’s benefit. Recently, the U.S. Department of Commerce [announced](#) that in 2021 outdoor recreation in Tennessee generated \$9 billion, supported 93,000 jobs, and accounted for 2.1% of the state’s economy. These statistics are buoyed by Tennessee’s outstanding boating, fishing, RVing, hunting, motorcycling, ATVing, and equestrian opportunities. Nationwide, outdoor recreation generated \$862 billion in output and 4.5 million jobs in 2021. In total, the outdoor recreation economy contributes more to the U.S. economy than oil and gas extraction, mining, and agriculture. The data also showed that outdoor recreation’s growth tripled that of the national economy from 2020-2021.

With these tailwinds in mind, Tennessee is positioned well to further expand its outdoor recreation economy via the creation of an Office of Outdoor Recreation or other form of interagency coordination. Eighteen other states (most recently Arkansas, Maryland, and Massachusetts) have created similar offices to implement strategic plans that grow outdoor recreation through policies, programs, and initiatives. Tennessee’s creation of such an office would help leverage existing resources to increase rural prosperity, build healthy communities, develop a next-generation workforce, and promote environmental stewardship and responsible resource development.

This coordination would also help attract new businesses to Tennessee, recruit and retain employees, improve urban and rural quality of life, help focus efforts already underway across multiple agencies, and sustainably drive Tennessee’s economy forward. Many facets of state government already support and promote Tennessee’s recreation opportunities, but a recreation office or similar form of coordination would unify these efforts and ensure efficiency among the administration, legislators, and groups and companies that work in the outdoor space.

Outdoor recreation is an economic multiplier. ORR and our members stand ready to help grow this essential part of the economy and contribute to the well-being of your residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Association of Marina Industries
Boat Owners Association of the United States
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Writers Association of America

PeopleForBikes
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
RV Industry Association
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America