



August 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the growing \$788 billion outdoor industry, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable expresses our strong support for quickly advancing the bipartisan infrastructure bill. We appreciate the Biden Administration and Senate's work coming to an agreement on a broad and impactful bipartisan infrastructure package that invests in our local communities, our public lands and waters, and our people.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations – made up of 34 national outdoor trade association members — as well as other nonprofit organizations and business entities — serving more than 110,000 businesses. Our industry generates \$788 billion in economic output, annually employs 5.2 million Americans, accounts for 2.1 percent of GDP and was growing faster than the economy in every indicator prior to the COVID-19 pandemic — surpassing other major sectors like agriculture, petroleum, coal, and computer and electronic products. Our federally managed lands and waters are the backbone of our burgeoning industry, hosting over one billion visits annually and playing an essential role in supporting this vibrant sector of local communities and economies.

The infrastructure package represents an extraordinary bipartisan opportunity to not only rebuild our crumbling roads, bridges and airports, but also to improve the infrastructure behind our beloved public lands and waters. These meaningful investments in transportation, public lands, rural development, and natural infrastructure will connect more people to the outdoors and strengthen the outdoor recreation economy, which creates jobs, helps us to remain globally competitive, and ensures we recover from the impacts the pandemic had on workforce, local communities, our health and our quality of life.

We are especially appreciative that the bipartisan infrastructure bill includes:

Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund: This important funding supports fishery restoration and conservation efforts, boating access and infrastructure, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, as well as important fish stocking programs.

Investments in Natural Infrastructure: As we are increasingly dealing with the impacts of extreme weather across the country due to climate change, such as droughts, hurricanes and wildfires, these vital investments in natural infrastructure solutions, including green infrastructure, coastal restoration, and regenerative agriculture will help strengthen conservation, enhance outdoor recreation experiences, and reduce carbon emissions.

- The National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program will greatly benefit the recreational fishing and its enormous impact on local economies and communities.

- The \$100 million for restoring, preparing, or adapting recreation sites on Federal land is imperative to ensure the continued growth and success of the recreation industry and safe and quality outdoor experiences for all Americans

Forest Service's Legacy Road and Trail Program: The authorization of \$250 million for this important program will help to increase recreation opportunities by investing in maintenance of Forest Service roads and trails near threatened water bodies.

Additionally, we are hopeful to continue to work with you and your colleagues in the House of Representatives on two core programs for outdoor recreation:

The Inclusion of the Recreational Trails Program Full Funding Act of 2021: Including this legislation would immediately increase funding for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) to \$250 million per year and then would allow adjustments based on a recently released study on gas tax revenue from non-highway vehicles. The RTP funds motorized, non-motorized and mixed-use trail development, maintenance, and education in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP): We thank Congress for including these vital programs and support increasing total funding for the FLTP to \$555 million/year, the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) to \$400 million/year (\$200 guaranteed funding), and the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to \$345 million/year, would provide vital funding for infrastructure on and around federal lands and waters that provides access to many outdoor recreation activities. ORR would request that the Senate adjust their language to align with the INVEST Act recently passed that increases total funding across vital Federal Lands Highway (FLH) programs and establishes set asides for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation within FLTP.

Throughout the pandemic, Americans turned to outdoor recreation for health and wellness, transportation, and to safely connect with family and friends. Record numbers of people are accessing the outdoors and there continues to be a growing demand for quality outdoor infrastructure investments. When Americans participate in outdoor recreation, they purchase gear, equipment, food, lodging and more, and contribute tens of billions of dollars in annual tax revenue to federal coffers. Much of America's recreation infrastructure on federally managed lands and waters is also associated with revenue streams that fund conservation programs - fishing and hunting licenses; entrance and activity fees; campground, slip and launch fees; recreation permits and registration fees; and excise and fuel taxes. Additionally, studies have confirmed that for every dollar Congress invests in the National Park Service, \$10 is returned to the U.S. economy, which directly benefits our nation's rural areas and gateway communities.

We encourage the Senate to advance this bipartisan infrastructure legislation quickly and look forward to working with you and your staff on any implementing these provisions that support the outdoor recreation industry, and its over 144 million participants nationwide.

Sincerely,

America Outdoors
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Boat US
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 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
Specialty Equipment Market Association
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Sports and Fitness Industry Association
The Corps Network