

WHAT IS THE AMERICA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION ACT?

The America's Outdoor Recreation Act (AORA, S.873) is a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive recreation package that combines several bipartisan and bicameral bills the outdoor recreation industry has long supported including the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act, the Outdoor Recreation Act, the Recreation Not Red Tape Act, and other pragmatic pieces of outdoor recreation legislation. This bill, sponsored by Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and John Barrasso (R-WY) and unanimously passed out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources, serves as a reminder of how the outdoors brings people together from both sides of the aisle.

This commonsense legislation would appropriately meet the growing demand for access to the outdoors while also protecting public lands and waters for future use by improving experiences and access for all, advancing conservation efforts, mitigating the impacts of increasing visitation, and continuing to grow the outdoor recreation economy.

According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis released this year, the recreation industry generated \$862 billion in economic output, accounted for 1.9 percent of GDP and 4.5 million American jobs, and grew over three times faster than the U.S. economy from 2020-2021.

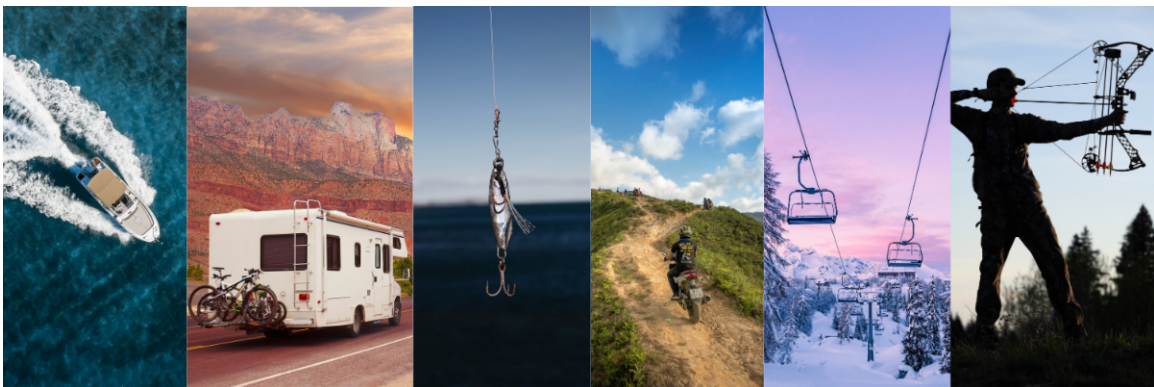
This transformative legislation would be a win-win for businesses, conservation, and Democrats and Republicans alike, while supporting rural economies, communities, and our American quality of life.

WHAT DOES IT SOLVE?

This bipartisan legislation would help modernize antiquated systems within the federal government that have created unnecessary barriers to accessing the outdoors. This package of bills does several vital things, including:

- Streamlining the permitting processes for outdoor excursions
- Supporting rural communities by building sustainable local economies
- Creating partnerships to update infrastructure and keep recreation areas open
- Extending outdoor recreation seasons
- Ensuring equitable access to the outdoors
- Improving visitation data on public lands
- Making updates to obsolete reservation and permitting systems
- Providing more tools for public land managers to plan for sustainable and responsible recreation for the future for everyone.

A Recreation Package would move our federal land management agencies into the 21st century and truly be a legacy achievement for the recreation economy across the country.

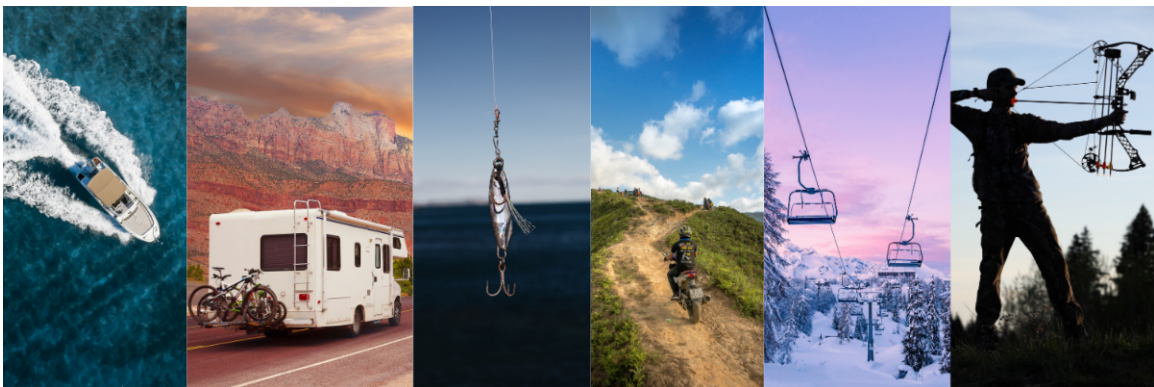


HOW DOES IT DO IT?

- Assists agencies in planning for recreation where appropriate to provide better outcomes for recreation users and the conservation of our shared public lands and waters
 - Codifies the establishment of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) to help coordinate recreation priorities and challenges across siloed federal agencies
 - Directs agencies to identify long-distance bike trails and publicize recreation closures online
 - Recognizes the appropriateness of recreational climbing and placement and maintenance of anchors that will help with climbing access on public lands
 - Assists with parking where it can be dangerous or lead to overcrowding
 - Provides clarity of where and when certain vehicles are allowed or prohibited with updated maps
 - Establishes pilot programs to help modernize campgrounds and buildings on public lands and allows for innovative funding models to support the financing of recreation projects
 - Plans appropriately for recreation where it is the primary use of the land and water through the agency planning process

- Supports gateway and rural communities in their efforts to both grow recreation economies and support sustainable tourism that protects our shared natural resources and conservation goals
 - Improves broadband internet connectivity at front-country recreation sites
 - Extends recreation shoulder seasons so people can get outside more times throughout the year, dispersing visitation and spreading out the economic benefit to local communities
 - Allows federal agencies to identify needs for communities to better support recreation and benefit from its myriad of impacts through collaboration with state, local, and tribal governments
 - Establishes a unified and consistent data collection system across agencies to help inform policy managers and recreationists in real-time about visitation numbers to make the best financial, resource, and recreation decisions.
 - Allows for online purchases of state and federal lands passes and for the collection of recreation fees online

- Allows more people to benefit from outdoor experiences through guided/facilitated outings and media with updated tools for agencies to streamline processes and eliminate red tape
 - Creates more transparency in the permit process so that businesses, non-profits, and universities can plan their trips with more information and certainty
 - Provides flexibility in user days and cross-agency trips so more groups can have access and helps to mitigate the impacts of cancellations due to climate-related events
 - Supports universities running outdoor programs on federal lands and waters



- Modernizes film and photography permitting on public lands to account for changing technology
- Increases opportunities for people to volunteer on public lands and waters
- Improves access and resources for hunters and anglers
 - Seeks to ensure Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service districts have designated target shooting ranges open to the public where they can practice in a safe and responsible manner
 - Authorizes qualified volunteers to participate in non-native wildlife management activities in the National Park System
 - Provides agencies with the ability to decontaminate watercraft to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species
- Supports youth and veterans
 - Coordinates with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to ensure service members and veterans have access to outdoor recreation and outdoor-related volunteer wellness programs
 - Allows outfitters to use picnic areas on federal lands without requiring a permit, subject to size and frequency restrictions
 - Creates a national strategy to provide more youth with outdoor experiences
 - Directs a report on special recreation permits serving rural or urban, underserved communities relative to outdoor recreation opportunities
 - Allows smaller cities to benefit from urban park funding programs

WHAT IT DOESN'T DO:

- Allow for unplanned recreation that could harm natural resources
- Cost taxpayers more money
- Contribute to the degradation of resources at high-impact sites
- Amend the Wilderness Act or any other conservation law
- Cut off access for any user group

“More Americans than ever are getting outside to reap the endless benefits that come from spending time on our nation’s public lands and waters,” said **Jessica Turner, President of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable**. “America’s Outdoor Recreation Act of 2023 will help to ensure that all Americans have access to the outdoors – from our wildest, most majestic national parks to local green spaces – and set the multi-billion-dollar outdoor recreation industry up for a successful and sustainable future. This is common-sense legislation without additional cost to the American taxpayer that will pack a major punch when it passes, which is a win for everyone, regardless of background, region, or party.”

