



Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

August 19, 2024

Dear Governor Whitmer,

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) – the nation’s leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations, businesses, and state offices of outdoor recreation representing more than 110,000 American businesses across the \$1.1 trillion outdoor recreation economy – writes today to share its gratitude and thanks for your historic \$780 million investments in Michigan’s state parks during your administration.

Michigan’s outdoor recreation economy has reached new heights thanks to your leadership and government structures like the Michigan Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry led by Brad Garmon. [The most recent data](#) from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that Michigan’s outdoor recreation economy generated \$12.4 billion (2% of GDP) and 118,993 jobs for the state, growing nearly 12% from the year prior. Significantly, the state saw a 34% increase in GDP specifically from outdoor recreation manufacturing 2019-2022, demonstrating the contribution and opportunity of leveraging Michigan’s robust supply chain and manufacturing expertise to expand its support for the national outdoor economy.

In addition to your state park investments, we commend you for the significant accomplishments of Michigan’s outdoor recreation economy, including:

- \$250 million allotted for state parks and trails investment that has helped the Michigan Department of Natural Resources address a decades-long backlog of repair and maintenance needs and build a new state park in Flint.
- Launched SPARK grants to help local communities create, renovate and redevelop public recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Established the Nature Awaits program, which provides every Michigan fourth grader a free field trip to a state park.
- Provided funding for the new Michigan Outdoor Innovation Fund, a \$3 million investment fund dedicated to fostering the growth of early-stage startups in outdoor innovation and recreation technology across Michigan.
- Proposing \$10 million to support outdoor recreation businesses, including outdoor retailers, supply base companies, and outdoor recreation service providers in FY 24 Executive Budget proposal.
- Building the nation’s first off-road vehicle electric charging route in the U.S. through a local ORV dealer/outfitter in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and Polaris, with support of a Michigan Economic Development Corporation grant.
- Building the first electric boat charging corridor in the US running from Frankfort northwards to Mackinac Island.
- Advocating for and delivering economic relief programs to outdoor recreation-dependent businesses impacted by the low-snow winter in 2023-24.

- Partnering with ORR to host and introduce the Michigan Outdoor Industry Supplier Summit in 2021 to connect the assets and capabilities of the state's manufacturing and automotive industry powerhouse with its future as an incubator for production and innovation in the outdoor recreation sector.
- Announcing the Fresh Coast Maritime Challenge Grant Program to electrify Michigan's boating industry and decarbonize Michigan's waterways.
- Launching the National Park Service Mobility Challenge.
- Securing multiple federal grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to catalyze new growth across Michigan's outdoor recreation economy.

Please consider ORR a partner as you continue to feature the outdoors as a core part of Michigan's identity and to high-quality recreation opportunities across the Great Lakes State.

In the weeks ahead, ORR requests a meeting with you to discuss further opportunities to help Michigan's outdoor recreation economy thrive.

With gratitude,

### **Outdoor Recreation Roundtable**

American Horse Council  
 America Outdoors  
 American Sportfishing Association  
 Archery Trade Association  
 Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation  
 Association of Marina Industries  
 Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education  
 BoatUS  
 Diving Equipment and Marketing Association  
 Eddyline Kayaks  
 Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation  
 Marine Retailers Association of the Americas  
 Motorcycle Industry Council  
 National Forest Recreation Association  
 National Marine Manufacturers Association  
 National Park Hospitality Association  
 National RV Dealers Association  
 National Ski Areas Association  
 National Wild Turkey Federation  
 Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation

New Hampshire Office of Outdoor Recreation  
 Industry Development  
 New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division  
 Outdoor Industry Association  
 OHI  
 Outdoor Writers Association of America  
 Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation  
 PeopleForBikes  
 Professional TrailBuilders Association  
 Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association  
 RV Industry Association  
 Snowsports Industries America  
 Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals  
 Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA)  
 Specialty Vehicle Institute of America  
 Trust for Public Land  
 Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation  
 Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation