



January 19, 2017

The Honorable Ryan K. Zinke
US House of Representatives
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2601

Dear Congressman Zinke,

Congratulations on a successful hearing yesterday. The outdoor industry was encouraged by your testimony on the topics of keeping public lands public, working with scientists on climate change, addressing the \$12 billion maintenance backlog at our national parks through an infrastructure bill and following a Teddy Roosevelt approach of planning for the next 100 years of our shared public lands and waters.

As you know, the outdoor industry is a broad community that includes hikers, hunters, anglers, snowmobilers, skiers, cyclists and climbers. As businesses that depend on outdoor recreation, your nomination as secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior is particularly important to us. You have demonstrated many of the values emblematic of our industry during your time as a Montana state senator and more recently as Montana's congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives. We hope you will continue to work with us to support investments in the outdoor recreation economy that help us create healthy communities and vibrant economies across the country.

As you prepare for this critical role, we encourage you to fully examine the opportunities and benefits that the recreation economy brings to communities near public lands, as well as the inspiration it brings to both Americans and international visitors to the United States. In the 21st century, prosperous communities share a variety of characteristics in attracting employers, families and working professionals. Among the most important is access to outdoor recreation. We hope you will harness the momentum of the unanimous, bipartisan passage of the 2016 Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act in Congress and pursue policies that will promote and grow the outdoor recreation economy.

Community Development Through Recreation Assets

Public lands of all types, such as trail systems, rivers, lakes and parks, are powerful assets, which provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and generate economic activity in all corners of the country. These places are the infrastructure of the outdoor recreation industry, which produces over \$646 billion annually, employs 6.1 million Americans and contributes \$80 billion in local, state and federal taxes.

America's protected natural landscapes are its greatest attraction, and simply marketing



and advertising them is not enough; we must invest in their infrastructure and in visitors' experiences on them to continue to drive this economic engine and support the communities that depend upon our public lands. As the Trump administration and Congress contemplate an infrastructure package, they must provide increased resources for the grey and green infrastructure—the trails, roads, parks and bridges our businesses and the American people rely on.

As head of the Department of the Interior, you will have the opportunity to encourage economic development, private investment and prosperity across the country by enhancing recreation access and infrastructure within cities and rural communities. This is especially true in economically disadvantaged communities. Our shared recreation assets play an increasingly important role in mainstream business development and economic revitalization. Proximity to shared open spaces such as forests, deserts, trails, rivers and lakes makes for desirable places to live, work and retire. As you have seen in Montana, corporations and businesses of all types are using the quality of life that results from access to green spaces and trails as a key tool for recruiting and retaining highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

By focusing on the economic development opportunities associated with recreation assets, there is real potential to drive sustained economic growth in communities that are suffering from the boom and bust cycle of extractive industries. Communities lucky enough to have nearby public lands have growth opportunities that can complement traditional land uses and provide sustainable jobs in both the near and long term.

Public Land Ownership

Federal management of our public lands is the backbone of sustainable natural resource and recreation industries. Shared public land is a critical currency of the 21st century. All Americans benefit, not only from the resources responsibly extracted from our land, but perhaps even more so from the ability to visit our incredible American landscapes. State budgets simply are not equipped to make the long-term investments that gateway communities—and the businesses they have attracted—depend on. World-wide market forces and fluctuating commodity prices have undermined many communities in rural America. Transferring our public lands to individual states would bring increased financial uncertainty to these communities. We are encouraged by your commitment to keep our national public lands in public hands as we oppose the large-scale transfer of federal lands to the states.

Conservation Designations

The establishment of federal conservation designations in key places around the country has brought increased economic prosperity to nearby communities. Legislation enacted by Congress, local agreements, and at times the Antiquities Act has played and continues



to play a vitally important role in our national system of public lands by providing the opportunity to protect highly important and vulnerable public lands. There are many examples of federal conservation designations around the country that not only protect objects of historic and scientific interest, but also serve as economic drivers for local communities. The vibrant recreation economy of today would not be where it is without the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders at the local, state and federal levels, and the recreation economy's future depends on the continued preservation of recreation assets. We strongly encourage you to support and initiate federal conservation designations so that deserving and incredible places can be protected for future use. We appreciate your testimony that some places deserve higher protections, and other landscapes can be planned well to optimize recreation and other uses.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

As you well know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been one of the most effective recreation programs for over half a century. A bipartisan program, the LWCF creates recreation access, improves infrastructure and grows jobs—from urban parks to the beautiful backcountry. All of the tools in the program are critical to its success, and it is imperative that the LWCF receives full funding. This program is successful because it makes an impact in every county and state across the country. In a new era of prioritized energy development, there needs to be an offset or increase in royalties to provide certainty for recreation protection and access and for the businesses who rely on our great outdoors. This critical program, moreover, is set to expire in less than two years, and we know you understand the urgency for its reauthorization. We stand ready to work with you to secure long-term reauthorization and full funding for this crucial recreation program.

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We urge you to work with the outdoor recreation community across the country to coordinate public land management and funding to support this growing and critical economic driver. Consider us a partner in your commitments to keep public lands public and to protect our nation's recreation assets and outdoor heritage, including those preserved through conservation designations, as we all look toward the next 100 years of our uniquely American public lands system.

Thank you for your service to our country. We look forward to your confirmation in the next few days and working with you in the years ahead.

Most sincerely,

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY[®] ASSOCIATION



Amy Roberts
Executive Director

Accell North America- Kent, Washington
Backwoods- Austin, Texas
Bell- Scotts Valley, California
Blackburn- Scotts Valley, California
Burton Snowboards- Burlington, Vermont
Brooklyn Boulders- Long Island City, New York
CamelBak- Petaluma, California
Clif Bar- Emeryville, California
Cycling Sports Group- Wilton, Connecticut
Exxel Outdoors Kids- Boulder, Colorado
Exxel Outdoors, LLC- Boulder, Colorado
Far Bank Enterprises- Bainbridge Island, Washington
Giant Bicycle USA- Newbury Park, California
Giro Sport Design- Scotts Valley, California
Gregory Mountain Products- Salt Lake City, Utah
Ibex Outdoor Clothing- White River Junction, Vermont
Insta-bed- Boulder, Colorado
KEEN- Portland, Oregon
Kelty- Boulder, Colorado
Mountain Khakis- Charlotte, North Carolina
NEMO Equipment, Inc.- Dove, New Hampshire
The O.A.R.S Family of Companies- Angels Camp, California
Outdoor Research- Seattle, Washington
Petzl America- Salt Lake City, Utah
Quality Bicycle Products- Bloomington, Minnesota
Red Wing Shoes- Red Wing, Minnesota
Redington- Bainbridge Island, Washington
REI- Kent, Washington
Rio Products- Idaho Falls, Idaho
Sage- Bainbridge Island, Washington
Sierra Designs- Boulder, Colorado
SITKA Gear- Bozeman, Montana



Specialized Bicycle Components- Morgan Hill, California

SRAM- Chicago, Illinois

Slumberjack- Boulder, Colorado

Suisse Sport- Boulder, Colorado

Tahoe Mountain Sports- Truckee, California

Toad&Co- Santa Barbara, California

Trek Bicycle- Madison, Wisconsin

Ultimate Direction- Boulder, Colorado

Verde Brand Communications- Durango, Colorado

Wenzel- Boulder, Colorado

Western Spirits Cycling- Moab, Utah

Woolrich- Woolrich, Pennsylvania

X20 Sports- Boulder, Colorado