



The Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman
Committee on Rules

The Honorable James McGovern
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules

July 16, 2018

Re: Vote Recommendation on LWCF, National Monuments, and National Trails System Amendments to H.R. 6147

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

On behalf of the American Hiking Society, the Partnership for the National Trails System, and the thousands of diverse trail users our collective organizations represent, we urge the Rules Committee to take the actions below on amendments under consideration for H.R. 6147, Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019.

The amendments below impact the reauthorization and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the protection of our National Monuments, and the legacy of the National Trails System.

Rule In Order

- **SUPPORT- Amendment 22 offered by Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY), *Reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***

Zeldin Amendment 22 would permanently reauthorize the LWCF. The LWCF is America's most important program to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the nation. The program has funded, at no-cost to taxpayers, hundreds of local trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from National Parks, Forests and Wildlife Refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states. With only 76 days before this widely bipartisan program expires on September 30, Congress must act now to ensure that this invaluable resource continues.

- **SUPPORT-Amendment 142 offered by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-NY), *National Monument Protections***

Grijalva Amendment 142 would prohibit funds for modifying or revoking National Monuments established by the Antiquities Act. The Administration has cut nearly 2,000,000 acres of National Monument land at Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, with another 223,000,000 national monument acres at risk. These actions open this land to natural resource extraction claims, putting in jeopardy continued recreation access. Already, 245 miles of hiking trails have lost protection at these two monuments, and a new mining claim in the once-protected Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument will create both a visual disturbance and safety concerns next to a popular hiking site.

- **SUPPORT-Amendment 132 offered by Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), *Protection of Bears Ears National Monument***

Gallego Amendment 132 would ensure that no funds may be used to implement the Presidential Proclamation, *Modifying the Bears Ears National Monument*, issued on December 4, 2017. The Administration has cut nearly 202,000 acres of National Monument land at Bears Ears National Monument, with another 223,000,000 national monument acres at risk. These actions open this land to natural resource extraction claims, putting in jeopardy continued recreation access. 86% of hiking trails in Bears Ears have already lost protection and the impact of National Monument cuts are being seen with a new mining claim made in the once-protected Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument that will create both a visual disturbance and safety concerns next to a popular hiking site.

- **SUPPORT-Amendment 133 offered by Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), *Energy Development on Bears Ears National Monument***

Gallego Amendment 132 would ensure that no funds may be used to issue any permit for mineral exploration on lands originally reserved under the Presidential Proclamation, *Establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument*, issued on December 28, 2016, including lands recently cut from the monument. The Administration has cut nearly 202,000 acres of National Monument land at Bears Ears National Monument, with another 223,000,000 National Monument acres at risk. These actions open this land to natural resource extraction claims, putting in jeopardy continued recreation access. 86% of hiking trails in Bears Ears have already lost protection and the impact of National Monument cuts are being seen with a new mining claim made in the once-protected Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument that will create both a visual disturbance and safety concerns next to a popular hiking site.

- **SUPPORT-Amendment 105 offered by Rep. Courtney (D-CT), *New England Scenic Trail Funding***

Courtney Amendment 105 would provide an increase of \$300,000 for the New England Scenic Trail within the operation of the National Park System. As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System later this year, it is crucial to ensure that the National Park Service can meet the maintenance and administrative needs of the New England National Scenic Trail.

Reject

- **OPPOSE- Amendment 111 offered by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), *Reduction in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding for U.S. Forest Service***

Biggs Amendment 111 would transfer \$3.47 million from the Forest Service Land and Water Conservation Fund Land Acquisition account into the Spending Reduction account. Reducing the already-underfunded LWCF will endanger the Forest Service's efforts to conserve and preserve America's forests. The LWCF is our most important program to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the nation. The program has funded hundreds of local trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from National Parks, Forests and Wildlife Refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states. The program should be fully-funded at congressionally-mandated levels.

- **OPPOSE- Amendment 128 offered by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Reduction in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Funding for National Park Service**

Biggs Amendment 128 would transfer \$2.2 million from the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund Land Acquisition account into the Indian Education account. While Indian Education is an important program, reducing the already-underfunded LWCF will endanger the NPS efforts to conserve and preserve America's national parks and trails. Just last year, LWCF funding protected Grand Teton National Park from development. The LWCF is America's most important program to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the nation. The program has funded hundreds of local trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from national parks, forests and wildlife refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states. The program should be fully-funded at congressionally-mandated levels.

- **OPPOSE- Amendment 129 offered by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Reduction in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Funding for Bureau of Land Management**

Biggs Amendment 129 would transfer \$2.4 million from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land and Water Conservation Fund Land Acquisition account into the National Park Service (NPS) Maintenance Backlog. Addressing the NPS maintenance backlog is crucial, but doing so at the expense of the already-underfunded LWCF is not the right solution. This amendment will put at risk essential land acquisition projects at BLM, endangering the conservation and preservation of public lands. The LWCF is America's most important program to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the nation. The program has funded hundreds of local trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from national parks, forests and wildlife refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states. The program should be fully-funded at congressionally-mandated levels.

For additional information please contact Tyler Ray, American Hiking Society, tray@americanhiking.org.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Van Waes
Executive Director
American Hiking Society



Gary Werner
Executive Director
Partnership for the National Trails System

CC: Rules Committee Members