

February 10, 2020

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Recreation Community Urges Forest Service Inclusion in H.R. 1225 Prior to Final Passage

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned recreation groups and businesses thank you for your attention to the maintenance backlog affecting the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and strongly urge the agency's inclusion in the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act* (H.R. 1225), which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2019.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis data released in 2019, outdoor recreation accounts for 2.2 percent of United States Gross Domestic Product, supports 5.2 million American jobs, and contributes \$778 billion in economic output, surpassing other sectors such as agriculture, mining, utilities, and chemical products manufacturing.

While the National Park Service holds the largest share of the approximately \$20 billion maintenance backlog on the nation's federally managed lands and waters at approximately \$12.5 billion, the USFS holds the next largest share—approximately \$5.2 billion—and continues to face mounting deferred maintenance needs. As you know, deferred maintenance compounds with cyclical maintenance, negatively impacting outdoor recreational pursuits and the associated economic benefits such activities bring to rural communities. In the wake of the worst extended fire season in U.S. history, it's imperative that Congress addresses the agency's \$5.2 billion maintenance backlog to ensure that the USFS is able to meet current demand and to keep up with the increasing desire of Americans to pursue outdoor recreation opportunities on USFS lands.

Eighty-four million people annually enjoy the 158,600 miles of trails managed by the USFS, which generate \$9 billion in annual visitor spending and support 143,000 jobs. Maintenance of these routes is imperative to the outdoor recreation industry because the agency's sustainable, multiple-use management concept supports a variety of activities and programs. Without including the USFS in the solution, the agency will continue to be limited in its ability to carry out the multiple-use approach that enables prioritization of shared conservation stewardship, American jobs in rural communities, and supporting outdoor recreation, the USFS' top revenue generator.

The longer Congress allows the deferred maintenance needs of the U.S. Forest Service to mount, the longer and more expensive it will ultimately be to address them. Our nation's forests, grasslands, and the communities that rely on them need Congress' help so they can maximize recreational and conservation opportunities.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We look forward to working with you to achieving a historic and important step forward for places all Americans cherish.

Sincerely,

Access Fund
Alaska State Parks
Alaska Trails
America Outdoors Association
American Endurance Ride Conference
American Hiking Society
American Horse Council
American Motorcyclist Association
American Mountain Guides Association
American Sportfishing Association
American Trails
American Whitewater
American Woodcock Society
Angler's Covey, Inc.
Anza Area Trail Town
Appalachian Mountain Club
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Archery Trade Association
Arizona Natural History Association
Arizona Trail Association
Association of Marina Industries
Back Country Horsemen of America
Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico,
Northwest Chapter
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Bike Walk Montana
Boat Owners Association of the United
States
Canyonlands Natural History Association
Carolina Mountain Club
Cape Horn Conservancy
CHM Government Services
Community Training Works Inc.
Continental Divide Trail Coalition

Corazón Latino
Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive
Association
Dan River Basin Association
Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association
Enchanted Circle Trails Association
Florida Trail Association
Four Corners Back Country Horsemen
Friends of Mount Rogers
Georgia Appalachian Trail Club
Green Mountain Club
Ice Age Trail Alliance
International Snowmobile Manufacturers
Association
Mahoosuc Pathways
Marine Retailers Association of the
Americas
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Monmouth County Park System
Motorcycle Industry Council
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
National Association for Interpretation
National Association of RV Parks and
Campgrounds
National Deer Alliance
National Forest Recreation Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Horse Council
New Mexico Sportsmen
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
North Country Trail Association
Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club
Oregon Equestrian Trails

Outdoor Alliance
Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Ozark Trail Association
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Partnership for the National Trails System
Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society
PeopleForBikes
Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Public Lands Alliance
Public Lands Interpretive Association
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle
Association
Rocky Mountain Field Institute
Ruffed Grouse Society
RV Dealers Association
RV Industry Association
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance
San Juan Back Country Horsemen
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors

Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
Snowsports Industries America
Southern California Mountains Foundation
Specialty Equipment Market Association
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association
Tahoe Rim Trail Association
Tahoe-Pyramid Trail
Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club
The Biggest Little Trail Stewardship, Inc.
The Corps Network
The Mountaineers
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Trails and Open Space Coalition
Tread Lightly!
Trout Unlimited
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
Washington Trails Association
Wild Arizona
Wyoming Pathways

cc: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Majority Whip Jim Clyburn
Minority Whip Steve Scalise

Chairman Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member Rob Bishop