



Empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.20515

Re: American Hiking Society Support for Gomez, Morelle 181 (42) and Barragan 82 (3) Amendments; and Recreational Trails Program inclusion in INVEST Act

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of American Hiking Society and the 44 million strong hiking community who enjoy trails and green spaces in their communities as a crucial part of our nation's transportation systems, we ask you to **support Gomez, Morelle 181 (42) and Barragan 82 (3) Amendments** to expand access for ALL communities by addressing transportation barriers and creating new outdoor spaces. American Hiking also supports the provisions in the INVEST in America Act that reauthorize and increase support for the Recreational Trails Program.

Support Gomez, Morelle 181 (42) Amendment

Amendment 181 (42), Transit to Trails, creates a grant program to connect underserved neighborhoods to parks and public lands using accessible and affordable public transit. Amendment 181 would create public transit infrastructure needed to access these public lands and trails while connecting critically underserved communities to nature. Ensuring equitable access to the outdoors not only strengthens community health and resilience but is also a long-term investment for communities. Developing and supporting transit and parks, including trails, are two of the best investments that governments can make, pumping more than five dollars into the economy for every dollar spent by the government. Amendment 181 would contribute to that investment in transit by establishing a grant program under the Department of Transportation to provide transportation systems to and from critically underserved communities and public lands.

Support Barragan 82 (3) Amendment

Amendment 82 (3) would establish under law the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program administered under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Since its establishment in 2014, ORLP has made progress in expanding access to outdoor spaces for communities in urban areas. Authorization of the program under law is needed to ensure that our nation's natural spaces are available and accessible to urban hikers, especially communities of color whose access to and inclusion in outdoor recreation have been disproportionately negatively impacted by geography, socio-economic status, and other factors. ORLP is a must to ensure that our nation's trails, public lands, parks, and open spaces are accessible for all communities for generations to come.

Support for Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

American Hiking welcomes the inclusion of provisions to reauthorize and increase support for the Recreational Trails Program in the INVEST Act. Since its creation in 1991, RTP has enabled 30,000 trail projects and programs, including over 14,000 pedestrian and hiking trail projects, across the country providing hikers and all types of motorized and non-motorized trail users new and improved access to trails. RTP has allowed tens of millions of trail users in urban and rural areas to realize the benefits of trails including health and wellness, connectivity, and economic growth. We welcome continued improvements to RTP as outlined in the bipartisan H.R. 1864, including the completion of an updated fuel study on the amount of gas taxes paid by non-highway recreational users and providing funding for RTP based on the study (or \$250 million until the study is complete).

Please contact Tyler Ray, Director of Policy and Advocacy, tray@americanhiking.org, 301-565-6704 x705 with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tyler Ray".

Tyler Ray
Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy
American Hiking Society