



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

August 7, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.20510

Re: Support Klobuchar/Risch Amendment 2616 to Increase the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) by the Same Amount as the Transportation Alternatives Program

Dear Senators:

On behalf of American Hiking Society and the 44 million strong hiking community who enjoy the trails and green spaces in their communities as a crucial part of our nation's transportation systems, we ask you to **support a vote on and passage of Klobuchar-Risch Amendment 2616 to H.R. 3684, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, to increase the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) by the same percentage increase that Transportation Alternatives (TA) will receive in the legislation.** This amendment would not increase RTP's share of overall TA funding and this amendment would not divert \$1 billion from TA.

Since 2012, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) has been organized as part of the Transportation Alternatives set aside of larger federal highway programs with RTP funding at, or greater than, 9% of total TA set aside funding. The total increase in RTP funding for the next five years would continue that 9% funding level.

A long delayed report from the Federal Highway Administration was just released analyzing the amount of federal gas taxes paid by non highway recreational activity confirms that the total is nearly \$300 million annually, or more than three times the current funding (\$84M) of the Recreational Trails Program. This new information merits support for an amendment into the infrastructure bill currently under consideration to more equitably reflect the user paid funding the RTP program receives.

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.

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 black ink that reads "Tyler Ray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tyler Ray
Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy
American Hiking Society