



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

November 5, 2021

Re: Support for H.R. 5376, Build Back Better Act, to Support Trails, Address Equitable Access, and Provide Natural Climate Solutions

Members of the US House of Representatives,

On behalf of American Hiking Society and the 44 million strong hiking community who enjoy the trails and green spaces in their communities we write in support of H.R. 5376, the Build Back Better Act, which will support hikers, trails, public lands, and the outdoors by expanding equitable outdoor access, providing natural climate solutions, and supporting economic growth.

Trails are the gateway to the outdoors, connecting communities to public lands and green spaces. A failure to maintain, manage, and grow our nation's trails will limit access for all communities, stymie economic growth, and reduce opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation. It will also hamper economic recovery, add to the nation's healthcare costs, and frustrate tens of millions of Americans who utilize trails for a diverse array of recreation. It will diminish enjoyment of public lands and waters by reducing access—at a time when public use of America's trail systems is increasing dramatically.

Specifically, American Hiking Society supports the following sections:

- **Title XI- Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**
 - **SEC. 110003 NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS AND EQUITY GRANTS; including:**
 - (a)(1)(D) to build or improve complete streets, multiuse trails, regional greenways, or active transportation networks and spines

- **Title I- Agriculture**
 - **SEC. 11001 NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM RESTORATION AND FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS; including:**
 - (a)(8) \$100,000,000 for maintenance of trails on National Forest System land, with a priority on trails that provide to underserved communities access to National Forest System land
 - (a)(9) \$100,000,000 for capital maintenance and improvements on National Forest System land, with a focus on maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads and improvements that restore ecological integrity and conditions for at-risk species
 - (a)(6) \$450,000,000 for the Legacy Roads and Trails program of the Forest Service

American Hiking Society has concerns on the inclusion of prohibitory provisions related to Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and permanent trails included within Section 11001, which may unintentionally prohibit funding for critical trail maintenance work and needed rerouting of trails, including on National Trails System Trails, in the legislation.

- **SEC. 11002 NON-FEDERAL LAND FOREST RESTORATION AND FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS AND RE5 SEARCH; including:**
 - (a) (4) \$250,000,000 to award grants to a Tribal, State, or local government, a regional organization, a special district, or a nonprofit organization for projects on non-Federal land to expand equitable outdoor access and promote tourism on non-Federal forested land for members of underserved groups
- **SEC. 11003 STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

- **Title VII- Committee on Natural Resources**
 - **SEC. 70706 URBAN PARKS**
 - **CORPS (Multiple Sections)**
 - **CLIMATE RESILIENCE (Multiple Sections)**

Please contact Tyler Ray, Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy, tray@americanhiking.org 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