

June 10, 2014

First, I'd like to thank Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva for allowing me to testify today in support of H.R. 4283. Also, thank you to members of the subcommittee for your attendance.

H.R. 4283 is intended to authorize the use of maintenance equipment and the replacement of some outdated and potentially hazardous energy facilities at the River of No Return Lodge in Smith Gulch on the Salmon River in Idaho. As it currently sits, the River of No Return Lodge is a small outfitter on the Salmon River that provides a unique recreational experience operating under a Forest Service permit. Unfortunately, the Forest Service does not believe it has clear authorization to permit the use of necessary maintenance or replacement of facilities. This proposed bill is an effort to clarify Congress' intent in legislation passed in 2004 to retain the basic characteristics of the Lodge without substantially altering the existing use.

This legislation makes it clear that the owners of the Lodge are authorized to use weed trimmers, chainsaws, and other maintenance equipment needed for the general upkeep of the lodge. It also will allow the outfitter to reduce or eliminate his reliance on propane fuel and replace it with modest renewable energy sources. I believe H.R. 4283 is consistent with the goals set forth by this subcommittee to make recreational opportunities available, as well as leaving our lands in even better shape for future generations of Americans.

It should be noted that a few small changes will need to be made during markup of H.R. 4283 to address both technical corrections and concerns raised by interested parties. The bill, once amended, will have been crafted with the sentiments of both the Idaho Conservation League and the Wilderness Society in mind. We trust that the Forest Service will faithfully grant authorization for the maintenance and replacement activities without the burden of unreasonable environmental review costs.

I look forward to amending H.R. 4283 with these changes at a future mark up.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding this common sense legislation that has been carefully crafted with the stakeholder's views in mind, so the operator of the River of No Return Lodge can perform the fundamental maintenance and replace outdated energy sources needed to carry out his small business with respect to the existing law. Again, thank you Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva for the opportunity to speak on behalf of H.R. 4283.