



March 20, 2010

House to Vote on Public Lands Service Corps Act

Today, the House of Representatives will consider [H.R. 1612](#), the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009. The bill would expand the authorization of the Public Land Corp program that employs thousands of young people in conservation oriented jobs on public lands.

While Republicans support the goals of this program and encourage public participation in the care of America's public lands, this legislation could be improved by ensuring the responsible use of tax dollars and that the main mission of the program – restoring public lands – is upheld.

Republican concerns with H.R. 1612:

- The bill authorizes “such sums as may be necessary,” however the Congressional Budget Office has scored the bill at \$120 million over five years—double the current funding level.

In light of the nation's current fiscal crisis, National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-01) will offer an amendment under the rule to support caps on the current funding levels and sunset the authorization after five years.

- The Democrat Majority has blocked a Republican amendment to ensure that funds in this bill are used to improve federal lands, not for public advocacy. Rep. Bishop received a verbal commitment by the Majority that this would be addressed before the bill reached the House floor—that commitment was not fulfilled. In the past, funds may have been used for outside advocacy programs such as the [Udall Legacy “Party” Bus Tour](#). Groups associated with the Student Conservation Association, which is the primary recipient of funds under this act, are closely affiliated with groups currently involved in superfluous litigation to restrict public access to federal land and lock up energy supplies.
- The Majority has also not fulfilled its pledged to address giving enrolling preference to young people who live in counties receiving Secure Rural School payments – because the majority of the land is publically owned there is limited tax base and economic development potential.
- Wildfires pose some of the greatest threats to our public lands, yet this legislation does not include a single reference to the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) ,

which would help train our youth on how to prevent catastrophic forest fires. Removing reference to HRFA is harmful to forest health, unfair to timber dependent communities, and dangerous to citizens who live in or around federal lands who are now exposed to greater fire damage.

During the Committee markup, Democrats rejected an amendment offered by Rep. Bishop that would have put back a reference to HFRA and direct that at least 50 percent of the funding go to promoting the health of our public lands.

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