

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

January 5, 2018

Mr. Yvon Chouinard
Founder
Patagonia, Inc.
259 W Santa Clara St.
Ventura, CA 93001

Dear Mr. Chouinard:

Thank you for your recent letter in response to my invitation to appear before the House Committee on Natural Resources. While I appreciate the response, I am disappointed you chose to decline the invitation. In my 15 years of congressional service I have found most people jump at the opportunity to share their views before Congress – at least those who are confident their positions can survive public scrutiny.

Admittedly, your company press releases, letters, and op-eds outline your positions on various public land issues. They reveal an approach to corporate activism derived from within a limited ideological bubble. They appear to reflect a worldview of someone who rarely, if ever, encounters people with different viewpoints. It is unfortunate you continue to shield yourself from competing viewpoints. I was genuinely eager to hear further articulation of your views, as well as provide you with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of opposing perspectives.

More specifically, I am disappointed in your company's continued effort to mislead the public concerning President Trump's actions in Utah. You characterize them in your letter as "the largest reduction of public lands in American history." That is simply false. To the contrary, President's Trump's actions resulted in no reduction of public lands; every square inch in question remains in the federal estate; every square inch will continue to be managed by the federal government and subject to rigorous environmental review; every square inch will continue to be financed by the U.S. taxpayer. High-profile corporate citizens who make factually inaccurate and misleading statements and then hide from further scrutiny do a disservice to their customers and the American public.

It is an indisputable fact that American taxpayer dollars are being used to fund the maintenance, preservation, and upkeep of public lands, and this creates a market for your products. Don't get me wrong. I don't begrudge you or other private interests making money. I'm a school teacher who will never be rich, but I have no problem with people making money. What I do object to is people who want to make money on public lands while simultaneously supporting policies that limit the general public's, and my constituents', access to public lands.

There is clearly a wide-range of opinions about the most effective and beneficial ways to manage our massive federal estate. My opinions, unlike yours, are constantly subject to public scrutiny. I am faced, on nearly a daily basis, with strongly advocated counter arguments. Even when I strongly disagree with my political opponents, I respect them and always remain willing to participate in a dialogue with them. Despite your apparent refusal to engage with those who see the world differently than you, I remain committed to hearing all voices and perspectives.

Although it is your right, living in a bubble isn't healthy, nor is it conducive to a robust discussion on important matters of public policy. If at any time you change your mind about appearing in a public setting for an open and transparent discussion, please consider this my standing invitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Bishop", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources