



April 17, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the nation's 135 Service and Conservation Corps (Corps), I write in support of the Recreation Not Red Tape Act (HR 3400) scheduled for mark-up on April 18, 2018. We applaud your efforts in developing a bipartisan bill, and urge the mark-up process and bill to remain bipartisan as it moves through the committee and the House of Representatives.

We are particularly supportive of provisions to encourage that information be provided to veterans and service members on Corps, increase volunteer and outdoor engagement, and expand opportunities for veterans and the public to recreate in new areas. We see significant potential to expand Corps' engagement with veterans through enhanced partnerships with land managers and strongly support the focus on hiring veterans. In addition to a hiring preference, veterans earn non-competitive hiring eligibility for two years in recognition of service in a Corps.

Veterans Corps offer a transition to civilian life and in-demand job skills. Serving in a Corps can provide a continued sense of mission and purpose and also be a way for veterans and their families to engage more with the outdoors. This is why we encourage inclusion in HR 3400 of another way to expand the opportunity for veterans to serve, gain in-demand skills, and address high-priority projects through the bipartisan 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act (HR 2987). This legislation was introduced by a veteran and recently passed the committee.

The Corps Network is comprised of 135 Corps which provide young adults and veterans (Corpsmembers) the opportunity to serve their country, advance their education and obtain in-demand skills. Serving in crews and individual placements, Corpsmembers accomplish important conservation, recreation, infrastructure, wildfire, and disaster response service projects on public lands and in rural and urban communities.

The Recreation Not Red Tape Act represents a balance between recreation and conservation and developing new ways to engage veterans and military families, the public, and volunteers on our public lands and in Corps. We again encourage the bipartisan spirit of this legislation to continue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Sprenkel
President & CEO