

October 2, 2017

The Honorable Tom McClintock
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
238 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3400; Recreation Not Red-Tape Act
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 10:00 AM; 1334 Longworth House Office Building

Chairman McClintock, Subcommittee on Federal Lands; Ranking Member Hanabusa, Subcommittee on Federal Lands; and Members of the Committee:

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is the national trade association for suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers in the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry, with more than 1200 members nationwide. The outdoor industry supports more than 7.6 million American jobs and makes other significant contributions toward the goal of healthy communities and healthy economies across the United States. On behalf of our member businesses, we thank you and the committee for holding this important hearing on the Recreation Not Red-Tape (RNR) Act.

Support for outdoor recreation, American outdoor industry business, and the economic benefits that a diverse array of outdoor recreation activities brings to local communities and local economies has bipartisan appeal and can have a real impact on the health and well-being of the 144 million Americans who recreate outside each year. OIA commends House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bishop and the cosponsors of H.R. 3400 (Representatives Polis, Simpson, and Beyer) for helping to move legislation that improves management of and accessibility to our nation's lands and waters. The RNR legislation's objective—providing more opportunities for millions of Americans and international tourists to enjoy our unique public lands system and ensuring they have a positive experience—is a goal we can all share.

RNR has some key provisions: improve the permitting process on United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, prioritize providing veterans access to experiences in the outdoors, allow the Forest Service to retain fees from ski areas similar to other permit fees, include recreation in the mission of some land and water management agencies, enhance the use of volunteers for maintenance and stewardship, direct that recreation metrics be added to land manager performance evaluations, support state-level outdoor recreation directors, update the way the public can access federal passes, and provide state input on recreation.

One of the concepts that we are most excited about in H.R. 3400 is the creation of an organic act for National Recreation Areas (NRAs). An earlier version of the legislation introduced in the last Congress also created a system of NRAs managed specifically for recreation, but one of the improvements in the current version of RNR is that it directs federal agencies, during the land management planning process, to proactively identify potential areas of recreational significance. This proposal allows Congress to give better direction to land management agencies, with the potential of alleviating conflicts through a more flexible management tool.

Having an organic designation behind NRAs will allow for a more nuanced range of protections to apply, offer a solid alternative for those who want to see places protected but don't want to see sustainable recreation uses closed out, and allow Congress to ultimately decide whether to designate an area and what that designation should look like.

With the growing recreation economy becoming an increasingly vital sector of the economy, it is time to implement the first-ever tool that will allow planning and management for multi-use landscapes where the greatest use is recreation. The passage of the RNR Act will ensure some places are managed for the benefit of present and future recreationists and the sustainability of the local economies that depend on recreation as a source of income and livelihoods.

Many of these same points will be brought up by the witnesses, three of whom represent OIA member organizations. We support this bill moving through committee and potentially adding other bipartisan provisions like Representative Tipton's and Representative Tsongas' Every Kid Outdoors legislation and a version of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps legislation. However, OIA does not support additions that would jeopardize the hard work that has been done by committee staff in the House and Senate to produce a truly pragmatic and bipartisan recreation bill.

We thank the committee for the discussion around this bipartisan and bicameral bill and look forward to a successful hearing this week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Wahl', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Jessica Wahl
Government Affairs Manager
Outdoor Industry Association

RNR Act Supporters

The Wilderness Society
Outdoor Industry Association
Travel Oregon
Timberline Lodge
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Trout Unlimited
KS Wild
KEEN
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts
Oregon Outdoor Alliance (OOA)
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
National Ski Area Association
YMCA
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
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The Mazamas
Travel Portland
American Horse Council
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National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds
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American Sportfishing Association
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association
Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association
Archery Trade Association
Specialty Equipment Market Association
American Alpine Club
Winter Wildlands Alliance
Access Fund
International Mountain Bicycling Association
American Whitewater
American Canoe Association
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Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA)
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Oregon Pack Works
The Corps Network
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International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association