

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

April 2, 2019

Rep. Deb Haaland
Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rep. Don Young
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Legislative hearing on H.R. 823, the “Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act”

Dear Chair Haaland and Ranking Member Young:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, we write to share our strong support for H.R. 823, the “Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act.”

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation’s public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

As outdoor recreationists passionate about the protection of the natural landscapes where we enjoy our varied pursuits, we strongly support the thoughtful protections embodied in the CORE Act. In addition to its essential protections for conservation values, the bill also protects hundreds of miles of trails, scores of climbing sites, more than 20 miles of whitewater paddling opportunities, and valued backcountry ski terrain.

In the San Juans, the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area protects backcountry ski terrain near Lizard Head Pass and creates management for the Ophir Valley area for new mountain biking trails near the town of Ophir. The Liberty Bell and Whitehouse Wilderness additions protect world-class hiking and climbing opportunities in the iconic Mt. Sneffels range while allowing for a trail corridor for the iconic Liberty Bell/Hardrock 100 trail. In the Continental Divide bill, the Tenmile Wilderness and Recreation Management Areas provide opportunities for long ridgeline technical traverses, challenging backcountry ski terrain, and world class mountain biking, and the Spraddle Creek Wilderness addition provides a primitive backcountry area in close proximity to downtown Vail while keeping the future mountain bike extension of the North



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

Vail Trail viable. These designations allow for a new Wilderness-urban interface which provides a unique opportunity to experience and protect these important landscapes.

All of the proposed designations in the CORE Act have been carefully vetted by recreation groups, and designations protect and enhance recreational opportunities like hiking, climbing, skiing, and mountain biking. The mineral withdrawals and resource protections in this bill further preserve the scenic and natural qualities of these landscapes.

We are particularly pleased to support legislation that designates Wilderness while also using other protective designations where more appropriate. This approach is essential, in particular, for protecting and enhancing mountain biking opportunities. Because of the collaborative approach employed in the bill's development, embracing input from local and national mountain biking stakeholders among others, the legislation enjoys broad support from the mountain biking community. This approach—embracing alternative designations where appropriate to protect both existing and prospective mountain biking opportunities—should be considered a model for other protective designation efforts around the country.

Thank you for holding a hearing to discuss this thoughtful and beneficial bill, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee in support of the CORE Act.

Best regards,



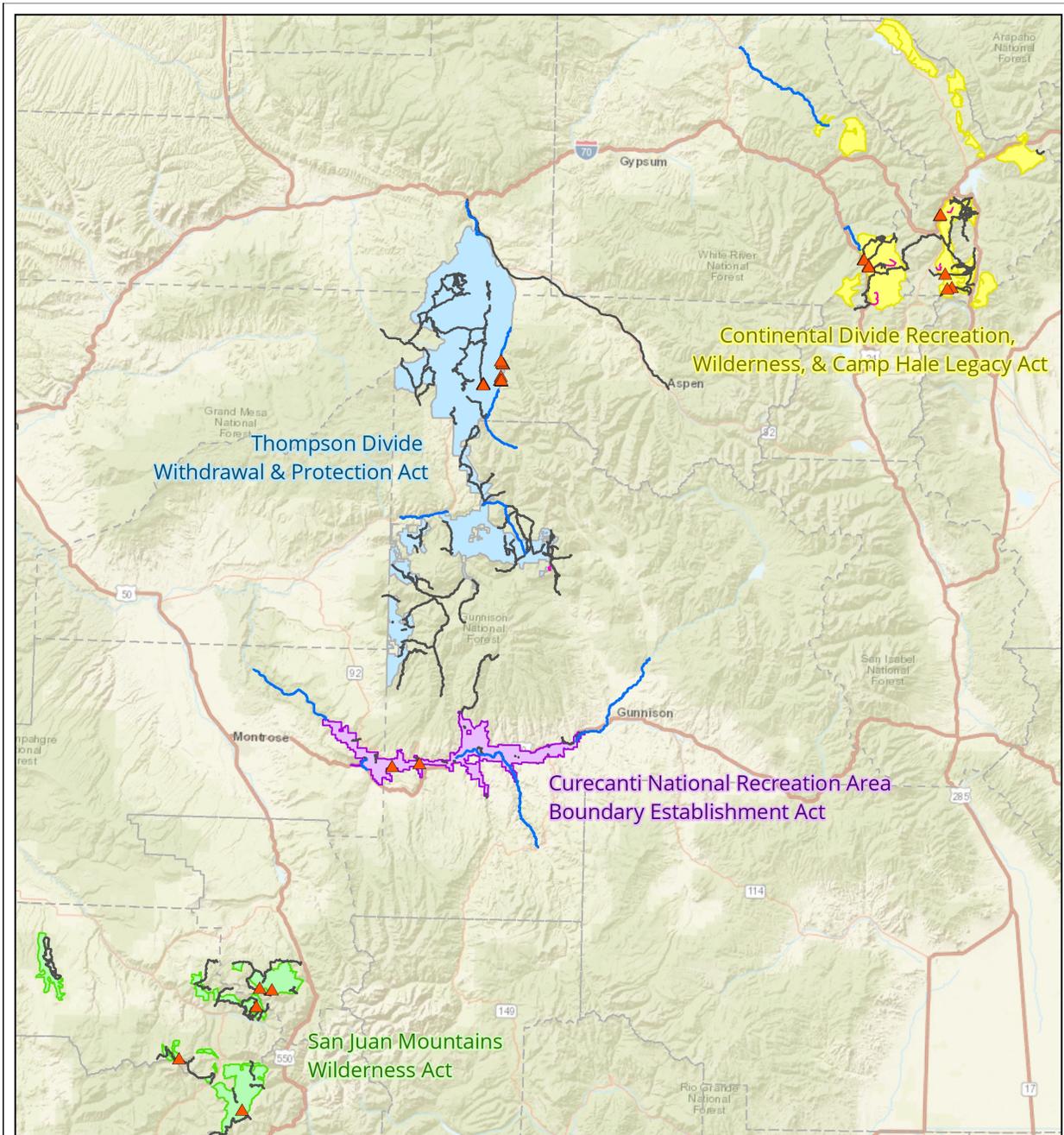
Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Rep. Joe Neguse

Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Chris Winter, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Dave Wiens, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
David Page, Interim Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Phil Powers, Chief Executive Officer, American Alpine Club
Sarah Bradham, Acting Executive Director, the Mazamas
Keegan Young, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club
Chad Nelson, CEO, Surfrider Foundation



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE



Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act

- Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, & Camp Hale Legacy Act
- Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act
- San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act
- Thompson Divide Withdrawal & Protection Act
- County Boundary
- Rock Climbing Site
- Whitewater Paddling River
- Backcountry Ski Trail
- Trail

