

September 26, 2019

Representative Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Mike Conaway  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
2469 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Abigail Spanberger  
Chair, Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
1239 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Doug LaMalfa  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
322 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member Conaway, Chair Spanberger and Ranking Member LaMalfa:

The undersigned recreation groups and businesses thank you for your attention to the maintenance backlog affecting the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and strongly urge the agency's inclusion in the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act* (H.R. 1225), which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources on June 26.

According to newly released government data, outdoor recreation accounts for 2.2 percent of United States Gross Domestic Product, supports 5.2 million American jobs, and contributes \$778 billion in economic output, surpassing other sectors such as agriculture, mining, utilities, and chemical products manufacturing.

While the National Park Service holds the largest share of the approximately \$20 billion maintenance backlog on the nation's federally managed lands and waters, the USFS holds the next largest share - approximately \$5.2 billion - and continues to face mounting deferred maintenance needs. As you know, deferred maintenance compounds with cyclical maintenance, negatively impacting outdoor recreational pursuits and the associated economic

benefits such activities bring to rural communities. In the wake of the worst extended fire season in U.S. history, it's imperative that Congress addresses the agency's \$5.2 billion maintenance backlog to ensure that the USFS is able to meet current demand and to keep up with the increasing desire of Americans to pursue outdoor recreation opportunities on USFS lands.

Eighty-four million people annually enjoy the 158,600 miles of trails managed by the USFS, which generate \$9 billion in annual visitor spending and support 143,000 jobs. Maintenance of these routes is imperative to the outdoor recreation industry because the agency's sustainable, multiple-use management concept supports a variety of activities and programs. Without including the USFS in the solution, the agency will continue to be limited in its ability to carry out the multiple-use approach that enables prioritization of shared conservation stewardship, American jobs in rural communities, and supporting outdoor recreation, the USFS' top revenue generator.

The longer Congress allows the deferred maintenance needs of the U.S. Forest Service to mount, the longer and more expensive it will ultimately be to address them. Our nation's forests, grasslands, and the communities that rely on them need Congress' help so they can maximize recreational and conservation opportunities.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We look forward to working with you to achieving a historic and important step forward for places all Americans cherish.

Sincerely,

Access Fund  
Alaska State Parks  
Alaska Trails  
America Outdoors Association  
American Endurance Ride Conference  
American Hiking Society  
American Horse Council  
American Motorcyclist Association  
American Mountain Guides Association  
American Sportfishing Association  
American Trails  
American Whitewater  
American Woodcock Society  
Angler's Covey, Inc.  
Anza Area Trail Town  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Archery Trade Association  
Arizona Natural History Association

Arizona Trail Association  
Association of Marina Industries  
Back Country Horsemen of America  
Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico, Northwest Chapter  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Bike Walk Montana  
Boat Owners Association of the United States  
Canyonlands Natural History Association  
Carolina Mountain Club  
Cape Horn Conservancy  
CHM Government Services  
Community Training Works Inc.  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition  
Corazón Latino  
Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association  
Dan River Basin Association  
Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association  
Enchanted Circle Trails Association  
Florida Trail Association  
Four Corners Back Country Horsemen  
Friends of Mount Rogers  
Georgia Appalachian Trail Club  
Green Mountain Club  
Ice Age Trail Alliance  
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association  
Mahoosuc Pathways  
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Monmouth County Park System  
Motorcycle Industry Council  
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust  
National Association for Interpretation  
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds  
National Deer Alliance  
National Forest Recreation Association  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
New Mexico Horse Council  
New Mexico Sportsmen  
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference  
North Country Trail Association  
Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club  
Oregon Equestrian Trails  
Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech  
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable  
Ozark Trail Association  
Pacific Crest Trail Association  
Partnership for the National Trails System  
Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation  
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society  
PeopleForBikes  
Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
Public Lands Alliance  
Public Lands Interpretive Association  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association  
Rocky Mountain Field Institute  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
RV Dealers Association  
RV Industry Association  
San Juan Back Country Horsemen  
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors  
Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition  
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club  
Snowsports Industries America  
Southern California Mountains Foundation  
Specialty Equipment Market Association  
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America  
Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association  
Tahoe Rim Trail Association  
Tahoe-Pyramid Trail  
Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club  
The Biggest Little Trail Stewardship, Inc.  
The Corps Network  
The Mountaineers  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trails and Open Space Coalition  
Tread Lightly!  
Trout Unlimited  
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado  
Washington Trails Association  
Wild Arizona  
Wyoming Pathways

Cc: Representative Marcia Fudge  
Representative Tom O'Halleran

Representative Chellie Pingree  
Representative Cindy Axne  
Representative Rick Allen  
Representative Ralph Abraham  
Representative Trent Kelly