

December 2, 2025

Senator Mike Lee
Chairman, Energy and Natural Resources
Committee
U.S Senate
Washington, DC 20151

Senator Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member, Energy and Natural
Resources Committee
U.S Senate
Washington, DC 20151

Re: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

Dear Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

We write on behalf of our millions of members and supporters to voice our strong support for S.2042, the Roadless Area Conservation Act ("RACA"), which was reintroduced this Congress by Senator Maria Cantwell and Senator Ruben Gallego. This legislation would codify the wildly popular 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) as well as the Colorado and Idaho Roadless Rules which collectively protect nearly 60 million acres of roadless national forest land in 39 states. These areas are cherished public lands that support outdoor recreation, wildlife, subsistence resources, and clean water, and serve as essential tools in the fight against climate change. At the time of the rule's promulgation, more than 600 public hearings were held across the country and 1.6 million Americans expressed public support.

Codification of this landmark rule is more important than ever. In June, the Trump Administration announced their intent to rescind the Roadless Rule in its entirety, putting these important lands at risk of road construction, logging, and extraction. The Roadless Rule has countless benefits:

Roadless Areas offer abundant outdoor recreation opportunities such as fishing, camping, hunting, and hiking. Millions of Americans take advantage of access to these public lands every year. This includes an estimated 11,337 climbing routes and bouldering locations, more than 1,000 whitewater paddling runs, 43,826 miles of trail, and 20,298 mountain biking trails. The Tongass National Forest, the largest national forest in the country with 9.3 million acres of roadless areas, annually generates \$425.2 million from recreational hunting and sport fishing alone. These lands are the backbone of a \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy that supports 5 million jobs.

Roadless Areas protect public landscapes and wildlife that depend on these habitats. Whether it is native salmon in Southeast Alaska or wolves in the Yellowstone area, these wild areas provide intact ecosystems to some of our nation's most iconic wildlife.

Roadless Areas help people. These sites are culturally important to Indigenous communities – whether for subsistence living, traditional medicine and arts, or other cultural practices. Further,

National Forests are the largest sources of municipal water supply in the U.S. and ensure healthy rivers and drinking water for communities across the country.

Roadless Areas support climate resiliency as hubs for mature and old-growth trees that are vital for absorbing and storing carbon. For example, the Tongass National Forest functions as a global carbon sink capturing an average of 10 million metrics of CO₂ each year.

Roadless Areas save taxpayers money. The U.S. Forest Service already has 371,000 miles of network roads and a maintenance backlog with over \$7 billion dollars' worth of repairs for roads and bridges (passenger car use only). More roads mean more costs, including by exposing taxpayers to billions in new liabilities from subsidized roads and money-losing timber sales. Additionally, rollbacks pave the way for logging and industrial development on federal lands.

Roadless Areas prevent fires. Wildfires are four times as likely to start in the vicinity of a road than in a roadless area. The Roadless Rule already allows for road building to protect public health and safety and forest thinning in unnaturally high fuel load areas. Fuel management activities in roadless areas have actually been more numerous on a per-acre basis than elsewhere in the national forests.

The Trump Administration closed their first Notice of Intent public comment period on September 19 after an extremely short comment period. Once more, Americans showed up again in strong support of the Roadless Rule: in the span of just 21 days, public comments totaled over a half of a million, and similar to 2001, the overwhelming majority support keeping the Roadless Rule in place. The Roadless Area Conservation Act would permanently codify the Roadless Rule, thereby preserving the clean water, recreation, wildlife, and cultural values of national forests nationwide. We strongly support this legislation and respectfully submit this letter as part of the hearing record.

Signed by:

350 Central Mass
350 Eugene
Advocates for Snake Preservation
Alaska Wilderness League
American Bird Conservancy
Bark for Mt Hood
Bee Friendly Williamstown
Biofuelwatch
Bird Alliance of Oregon
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
Californians for Western Wilderness
CalWild

Cascade Forest Conservancy
Cascadia Wildlands
Catoctin Land Trust
Center For Biological Diversity
Central Oregon LandWatch
Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Chattooga Conservancy
Citizens Climate Lobby CA San Mateo County chapter
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Relations LLC
Climate Writers
Color My Outdoors
Colorado Native Plant Society Conservation Committee
Colorado Wild Public Lands
Comité Schone Lucht
Conservation Biology Institute
Conservation Colorado
Conservation Northwest
Creation Justice Ministries
CURE
Defenders of Wildlife
Dogwood Alliance
Dolores River Boating Advocates
Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance
Earth Neighborhood Productions
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Ecotox Consulting
Elders Climate Action
Elders Climate Action - Massachusetts Chapter
Elwha Legacy Forests Coalition
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environment Georgia
Environment Michigan
Environment Minnesota
Environmental Law & Policy Center
epgc
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
Feminist Bird Club - Asheville Chapter
Forest Keeper
Friends of Bell Smith Springs
Friends of Blackwater, Inc.

Friends of Douglas-fir National Monument
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Inyo
Fundación Amigos de El Yunque, Inc
Gila Resources Information Project
Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance
Global Justice Ecology Project
Grand Canyon Trust
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Alaska Soles Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Bitterbrush Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Northern Front Range Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Polly Dyer Seattle Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Rio Grande Valley Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Rogue Valley Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, WHALES Broadband
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Green Cove Defense Committee
GreenLatinos
Heart of the Gila
High Country Conservation Advocates
Interfaith EarthKeepers
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation
Jewish Earth Alliance- PA
Kettle Range Conservation Group
KS Connectivity
KS Wild
Latino Outdoors
League of Conservation Voters
Leefmilieu
Lembaga Tiga Beradik
Los Padres ForestWatch
Luzerne County Community Action Coalition
Lynnhaven River NOW (LRNow)
Malach Consulting
Maryland Ornithological Society
Methow Valley Citizens Council
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Mighty Earth
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Mountain Mamas
Native Organizers Alliance
Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund

Natural Resources Defense Council
Natural Resources Law
Nature for All
New Hampshire Audubon
New Mexico Wild
Next Interior
North Cascades Conservation Council
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Old-Growth Forest Network
Olympic Climate Action
Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
Oregon Wild
Owen-Putnam Friends of the Forest
Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Passionist Solidarity Network
Patagonia
Pilchuck Audubon Society (Snohomish County, WA)
Pilchuck Audubon Society (WA State)
Protect Ancient Forests
Quiet Use Coalition
reLife Earth
Resource Renewal Institute
RESTORE: The North Woods
Rocky Mountain Wild
Save Our Canyons
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Silvix Resources
Snowlands Network
Society for Conservation Biology North America (SCBNA)
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
South Umpqua Rural Community Partnership
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Speak For The Trees Too, WV
Standing Trees
Student PIRGs
SURJ-Springfield/Eugene
Sustainable Middleborough

Teton County WY Backcountry Horsemen
The Center for Responsible Forestry
The Enviro Show
The Environmental Center
The Forest Advocate
The Mountaineers
The Western Environmental Law Center
The Wilderness Society
Third Act MA
Tree Action Seattle
Trees As A Public Good Network
Trust for Public Land
Tualatin Riverkeepers
Tuleyome
Two Degrees Northampton
Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub
Umpqua Watersheds
United Church of Christ
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Vet Voice Foundation
Virginia Wilderness Committee
Wabash Riverkeeper Network
Washington Wild
WaterWatch of Oregon
Wendell State Forest Alliance
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Western Slope Conservation Center
Whatcom Million Trees Project
Wild Connections
Wild Hope
Wild Montana
Wilderness Workshop
Wildflower grp
Willamette Riverkeeper
Williams Community Forest Project
Winter Wildlands Alliance
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
Wyoming Wilderness Association
Yaak Valley Forest Council