

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

December 9, 2025

Senator Steve Daines
Chair, National Park Subcommittee
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Angus S. King Jr.
Ranking Member, National Park Subcommittee
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Re: December 9th Subcommittee Hearing to Receive Testimony on Pending Legislation

Chair Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the human-powered outdoor recreation community, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on December 9th's Subcommittee hearing on legislation affecting national parks.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of nine 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, 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.

National parks are integral to America's identity, and are home to some of our country's best and most iconic opportunities for outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation and tourism in and around national parks is also vital to America's outdoor recreation economy, which contributed \$1.2 trillion in gross economic output, supported nearly 5 million jobs, and accounted for 2.3% of U.S. gross



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domestic product in 2023.¹ Our community appreciates the Subcommittee's attention to enhancing these recreation experiences and economic benefits. We hope that the Subcommittee will work towards passing a bipartisan package of public lands legislation in the 119th Congress.

Our comments on specific bills are below.

Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (S. 1870)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act, which would expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area by 118,000 acres and facilitate more equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities. The proposed National Recreation Area expansion is based on a six-year study by the National Park Service that considered opportunities to expand public access to nature, protect biodiversity, expand wildlife corridors, and more. The NPS conducted extensive public outreach to local and regional stakeholders throughout the study process before recommending that a significant addition be made to the Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area. The NPS now needs Congress to authorize this expansion by passing the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act.

Importantly, the bill will help facilitate access to the outdoors within and around one of the nation's most populous metropolitan areas. More than half of Los Angeles County, including some of the areas covered by the proposed National Recreation Area Expansion, is considered "park poor," with the vast majority of these areas located in communities of color. Passing the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act will help expand outdoor access in areas where it is needed the most, while giving the NPS the authority to better facilitate a positive outdoor experience in those areas.

Bonneville Shoreline Trail Feasibility Study Act (S. 1135)

Outdoor Alliance supports S.1135, which would require a feasibility study for designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail (BST) as a unit of the National Trails System. The BST is a planned multi-use trail following the historic shoreline of

¹ U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, BEA 24-53, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2023 (2024).



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ancient Lake Bonneville that connects multiple metropolitan areas in the Wasatch Front. The trail is important both in its own regard as a recreation resource, and as a centerpiece around which multiple communities have invested—and plan to invest—in new trail systems. This region-wide connectivity between trail systems is unique. We recommend that the Subcommittee pass S. 1135 to recognize the BST as a National Trail.

Reducing Waste in National Parks Act (S. 1926)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act, which would task the National Park Service with taking steps to eliminate single-use plastic products in National Parks. Disposable plastic products are a major pollution source affecting the outdoor recreation experience in National Parks, as well as in downstream waterways and oceans. This bill would require the NPS to consider the costs and benefits of eliminating disposable plastic products and take commonsense steps towards reducing or eliminating their use in National Parks where feasible. The NPS estimates that 80 million pounds of municipal solid waste is generated in the parks every year.² S. 1926 would address this significant environmental challenge while continuing the agency's legacy of conservation leadership.

Appalachian Trail Centennial Act (S. 2708)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act. The Appalachian Trail is one of America's most iconic outdoor recreation experiences and is one of the best known hiking trails in the world. Stewardship of the Trail's nearly 2,200 miles is accomplished through long-running partnerships between federal land managers and local and regional organizations—a model that has been replicated on other National Scenic and Historic Trails throughout the country. S. 2708 would statutorily recognize these partner organizations as Designated Operating Partners (DOPs) and institutionalize their role in stewarding National Trails. The bill would formally designate the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as a DOP for the Appalachian Trail and give the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture authority to designate additional organizations as DOPs. DOPs would be allowed to enter into 20-year

² U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, *Green Parks Plan: Third Edition, Advancing the NPS Mission Through Sustainable Operations* (2023).



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contracts with federal agencies to conduct stewardship activities on National Trails. Outdoor Alliance supports this bill, which will enhance the stewardship of the Appalachian Trail, as well as other National Scenic and Historic Trails across the country.

PATRIOT Parks Act (S. 2308)

The Protecting America's Treasures by Raising Inflow from Overseas Tourists (PATRIOT) Parks Act would allow individual National Park System units to establish new fees for international visitors and would require the Secretary of Interior to establish an international visitor fee for the America the Beautiful pass—a change that the Department of Interior recently announced it will be implementing. We appreciate that funds generated from these new fees would go towards individual NPS units (for individual park fees) or towards the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund (for America the Beautiful pass fees). We are concerned, however, about the mechanics of administering a tiered pricing system and the process for differentiating between domestic and foreign visitors at park entrance stations. Approaches that require frontline staff to verify citizenship or immigration status or process multiple fee schedules could undermine equitable access to public lands, increase congestion at already busy entrance gates, require additional staffing, and undermine the goal of raising revenue with minimal impact on visitors. If Congress chooses to pursue this idea, we encourage exploring implementation strategies that avoid these operational challenges rather than introducing complexity at park entrances.

OHVs in Capitol Reef National Park Act (S. 2970)

Outdoor Alliance opposes the OHVs in Capitol Reef National Park Act, which would allow Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) access to twelve existing roads in Capitol Reef National Park. Currently, Capitol Reef does not allow OHV use inside of its boundaries in order to protect the park's natural, cultural, and recreational values. Allowing OHV access to these roads would increase noise pollution within the Park, and would increase the likelihood of illegal off-road travel by OHVs, which are capable of traveling over a wider variety of terrains than standard motor vehicles. Although the bill's stated intent is to increase access to Capitol Reef for Americans



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with disabilities,³ all twelve of the roads affected by the bill are currently accessible by standard motor vehicles, which enables users of all backgrounds to experience these areas. We recommend that the Subcommittee instead explore where investments in the Park's existing road system and other infrastructure might enhance access for park visitors with disabilities.

A bill to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali (S. 573)

Outdoor Alliance supports S. 573, which would restore the name Denali to North America's tallest mountain peak. Denali—the name given to the peak by Alaska's Koyukon Athabascans—has been recognized as the official name by the State of Alaska since 1975. Outdoor recreationists of all backgrounds admire Denali for its beauty and grandeur, and achieving its summit is a lifetime goal for many climbers and mountaineers worldwide. We encourage the Committee to pass S. 573 to restore the mountain's rightful name.

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Thank you for considering our community's input. We look forward to working with you to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities at America's national parks.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Vice President for Policy and Government Relations
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Chief Executive Officer, Outdoor Alliance
Heather Thorne, Executive Director, Access Fund

³ Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, *Lee, Curtis Introduce Outdoor ADA Alongside Measures to Keep Roads Open for Americans with Disabilities* (Oct. 6, 2025), <https://www.energy.senate.gov/2025/10/lee-curtis-introduce-outdoor-ada-alongside-measures-to-keep-roads-open-for-americans-with-disabilities>.



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