

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

February 24, 2015

Rep. Tom McClintock
Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Niki Tsongas
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: February 25 Subcommittee hearing and H.R. 2316, H.R. 3650, and H.R. 4579

Dear Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, we write to share our strong opposition to three bills before the Subcommittee, H.R. 2316, H.R. 3650, and H.R. 4579, that propose to give away public lands belonging to all Americans and undercut requirements and processes aimed at achieving balanced management.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of seven 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, and the American Alpine Club and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, and backcountry ski and snowshoe on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

H.R. 2316, the “Self-Sufficient Community Lands Act,” and H.R. 3650, the “State National Forest Management Act of 2015”

Outdoor Alliance strongly opposes H.R. 2316 and H.R. 3650, which propose to turn over wide swaths of National Forest System land to management by advisory committees appointed by state governors (H.R. 2316) or to the states (H.R. 3650). These proposals would undermine collaborative Forest Planning efforts, circumvent established processes for public input and review like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Administrative Procedure Act, and take lands, in practice, out of multiple-use management in favor of timber development to the detriment of recreational and ecological values, as well as science-based management.



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More fundamentally, however, these bills would take lands owned in common by all Americans and turn them over to appointed bodies representing a limited range of stakeholders, or to the states with a mandate to prioritize timber development. National Forests are owned in common by all Americans, not just residents of the states in which they are located, and have a wide range of stakeholders beyond timber interests, many of whom may be more geographically dispersed than the states in which they are located. These lands provide wildlife habitat and ecosystem services, as well as support for outdoor recreation and the \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy.

Outdoor Alliance does not oppose timber harvest on public lands. The outdoor recreation community does, however, strongly oppose efforts to turn over public lands wholesale to private interests or to states, and we have serious concerns about proposals that are intended to upset procedures aimed at ensuring balance among sometimes-competing uses. These proposals, in a very real way, undercut the ability of national public lands to support outdoor recreation and the outdoor recreation economy by circumventing procedures like Forest Planning that ensure that uses like timber harvest occur in a manner that is cognizant of the other benefits that our National Forests provide.

H.R. 4579, the “Utah Test and Training Range Encroachment Prevention and Temporary Closure Act”

Outdoor Alliance likewise opposes H.R. 4579, which would expand the Utah Test and Training Range while facilitating land transfers that would harm recreation access and ecological values and, most problematically, transferring hundreds of questionable RS 2477 rights-of-way to counties, undercutting outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands. These transfers are wholly unrelated to any legitimate national defense need, and the test range expansion itself is being proposed absent any formal request from the Department of Defense. In the absence of any demonstrated need for this legislation, the Subcommittee should carefully consider the wide range of problematic provisions contained in the bill with regard to all of the other values supported by public lands.

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Thank you for considering the perspective of the outdoor recreation community on these bills before the Subcommittee.

Best regards,



Adam Cramer
Executive Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc:

Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Michael Van Abel, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Elizabeth Lunney, Interim Executive Director, The Mountaineers
Phil Powers, Executive Director, American Alpine Club

