

# OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

January 20, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
709 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
511 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

## **Re: Nomination of Rep. Ryan Zinke for Secretary of Interior**

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of eight 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, and the Mazamas 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.

In light of the committee's recent hearing on the nomination of Rep. Ryan Zinke to become the next Secretary of the Interior, we would like to share our community's perspective on the hearing and his potential confirmation as Secretary.

As we described in an earlier letter to the committee, we believe it essential that the next Secretary of the Interior commit to principles and positions instrumental to the stewardship of our nation's public lands and the recreation and conservation values they support, including:

- Keeping public lands public and committing to oppose the transfer or sale of public lands;
- Supporting conservation measures for special landscapes, as well as committing to maintaining the integrity of the tools that make those protections possible;
- Supporting modern land management planning tools and processes;
- Protecting and enhancing opportunities for public engagement on land management decisions;
- Maintaining a strong, science based approach to land management decisions, including recognizing the role of social sciences; and



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- Recognizing the important role that public lands play in combatting the effects of climate change.

At the committee's hearing on January 16<sup>th</sup>, we were pleased by much of what we heard from Rep. Zinke. In particular, we were pleased to hear:

- Firm opposition to the transfer or sale of public lands;
- A recognition of the significant and growing importance of recreation on public lands;
- A recognition that there are important places on our public lands that deserve heightened protection, and that the balance of public lands should be managed with a commitment to sustainability and future generations;
- A commitment to science-based decision making, as well as Rep. Zinke's appropriate praise for the work of agency scientists and professional staff;
- A repeated recognition of the important role of NEPA in land management decision making;
- A commitment to fight for the future of the Land and Water Conservation Fund;
- A goal to use a potential infrastructure spending bill in part as a vehicle for addressing our public lands maintenance backlog and infrastructure needs;
- The statement that clean water is a right, not a privilege; and
- An acknowledgment that climate change is real and human-caused.

During the hearing, Rep. Zinke spoke admiringly of Theodore Roosevelt and his conservation legacy, as well his is ambition to steward our public lands in a fashion that Americans living 100 years from now will look back on with gratitude. We share Rep. Zinke's admiration for Roosevelt and appreciate his commitment to making decisions with the long view in mind. With that said, we are concerned that some of Rep. Zinke's statements do not square with this ambition.

First, while we appreciate the acknowledgment that climate change is not a hoax, recognizing its reality is not a response commensurate with the gravity of the threat. As Secretary of the Interior, Rep. Zinke would be in an essential position of responsibility to address this urgent threat, both in terms of protecting our public lands from its impacts and in recognizing the role that energy produced from public lands is playing as a cause of climate change and as a potential solution as our country transitions to a clean energy future. This threat is a defining challenge of our time, and it demands a serious and robust response from our next Secretary of the Interior.

Second, we are concerned by some of Rep. Zinke's statements concerning National Monuments and use of the Antiquities Act. We commend Rep. Zinke for his commitment to building trust with public lands communities across the country and his willingness to listen to those who disagree with past decisions regarding land management decisions



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on our public lands. However, we view the Antiquities Act—signed by Theodore Roosevelt, and used by him and his successors in both political parties to protect millions of acres of our country’s treasures—as a bedrock conservation law that should not be undercut. We fully respect the prerogative of a new administration to apply the law differently moving forward, but those changes must be prospective and not directed toward dismantling existing protections.

In all, we are pleased by Rep. Zinke’s strong commitments to protecting our public lands and empowering the professionals at the land management agencies he would be charged with leading. In light of those commitments, which we take to be earnest and sincere, we support his confirmation as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Best regards,



Adam Cramer  
Executive Director  
Outdoor Alliance

cc:

Rep. Ryan Zinke

Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund  
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association  
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater  
Bruce Alt, VP Government Relations, International Mountain Bicycling Association  
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance  
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers  
Phil Powers, Executive Director, American Alpine Club  
Lee Davis, Executive Director, The Mazamas

