

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

January 16, 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: Hearing on the 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, and 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.

As the committee considers the nomination of Rep. Ryan Zinke to become the next Secretary of Interior, we would like to share the perspectives of the outdoor recreation community on this important nomination.

In his time in Congress, Rep. Zinke has shown himself to be an independent voice for Montanans on public lands issues. As a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, he has taken some tough votes on important issues for the outdoor recreation community, including keeping public lands public and reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for which we applaud him. As the Senate considers moving Rep. Zinke into a position where he would be responsible for representing the interests of all Americans on public lands, we believe that it is essential that Rep. Zinke reaffirm his commitment to keeping public lands public for all Americans, protecting core conservation laws like the Antiquities Act, and supporting a balanced, science-based approach to land management.



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As Secretary of Interior, Rep. Zinke would be responsible for the management of millions of acres of public lands belonging to all of our country's citizens in common. These lands and waters are the birthright of all Americans, and the Secretary of Interior is in an essential position of responsibility to safeguard this trust against efforts to abandon the concept of public lands by transferring them to state or private control.

Additionally, as the representative of all Americans on land management issues, we believe that it is essential that the Secretary work toward balance in the management of public lands by:

- Supporting conservation measures where appropriate (as well as the tools, both legislative and administrative, that make conservation possible);
- Supporting comprehensive and modern land management planning efforts and the tools—like Master Leasing Plans and BLM's Planning 2.0 initiative—that enable them;
- Protecting and enhancing opportunities for public engagement in land management decision making;
- Standing behind a strong, science-based approach to land management decisions (including social sciences); and
- Supporting the important role that public lands play in combatting the effects of climate change.

In addition to delivering the personal benefits enjoyed by the millions of Americans who recreate on public lands and waters, our public lands are the essential infrastructure of the \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy that employs more than 6.1 million Americans. As Secretary of Interior, Rep. Zinke would be in a powerful position to enhance or obstruct the vitality of this important economic sector. The outdoor recreation economy is dependent on clean air and water, accessible and well-managed public lands, and policies that ensure recreation, conservation, and resource development are appropriately balanced.

We ask that the committee carefully consider Rep. Zinke's views on these topics, which are of great significance to the outdoor recreation community. We hope and expect that Rep. Zinke will answer thoughtfully and reiterate his support for keeping public lands public and protecting essential conservation tools. In the past, Rep. Zinke has spoken favorably about the example of Theodore Roosevelt, who signed the Antiquities Act and helped to create more than 230 million acres of public land; we look forward to hearing



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Rep. Zinke articulate a similarly forward-looking vision for our country's public lands on which future generations will look back with admiration and gratitude.

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
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

