

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

July 16, 2018

Rep. Rob Bishop
Chair, House Natural Resources Committee
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 5171, “Ski Area Fee Retention Act”

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

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, the Mazamas, and Colorado Mountain 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.

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, we write to share our thoughts on H.R. 5171, the “Ski Area Fee Retention Act.”

In general, our organization does not oppose the concept of the Forest Service retaining fees paid by the ski industry for the use of public lands, and we also recognize the needs of the ski industry to have permits associated with its activities processed in an expeditious fashion. We are concerned, however, by some aspects of the bill as currently drafted, and we ask the subcommittee to ensure that these fees continue to benefit the public at large rather than the ski industry exclusively.

Our community believes that it is appropriate for ski areas to be paying fees for their—essentially exclusive—use of public lands, and those fees should be directed toward a public purpose broader than addressing the industry’s own development needs. We would like to see the purposes for which retained fees can be used broad enough to encompass, at minimum, special-use permitting and recreation infrastructure needs beyond what is directly related to ski areas. This change should continue to benefit the ski industry by freeing agency capacity, as well as by making Forests more attractive recreation destinations, attracting more customers to their businesses.



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Additionally, we are concerned that ultimately, appropriations to the Forest Service could be scaled back in consequence of this new revenue source, and the result would be replacing appropriated dollars with money allocated to specific, very limited purposes related to ski area development.

We ask the Subcommittee, before proceeding with this bill, to make necessary changes to ensure that fees appropriately paid by the ski industry for its use of public lands continue to redound to the benefit of the broader public rather than the industry alone.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Zachary Leich-Huey, Interim Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Dave Wiens, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Phil Powers, Chief Executive Officer, American Alpine Club
Lee Davis, Executive Director, the Mazamas
Holly Barrass, Interim Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club

