

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

March 8, 2018

Senator Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Roadless Rule and backcountry recreation

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

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.

Outdoor Alliance opposes efforts to use appropriations legislation as a means to eliminate the protections for Roadless Areas in Alaska. The Roadless Rule is an important conservation tool that protects many of our most valued backcountry recreation areas. The Roadless Rule was established in 2001 after enormous public outreach and was intended to “provide lasting protection in the context of multiple-use management” for the 60 million acres of Roadless areas on our National Forests and Grasslands. It is fundamentally important that some areas of our Forests and Grasslands—including many areas invaluable for outdoor recreation—are protected as Roadless Areas.

Our community values these areas for the opportunities they provide for climbing, hiking, mountain biking, paddling, and backcountry skiing. While these areas are protected from new development, their management is less restrictive than Wilderness, providing important middle-ground management regimes for important places. Roadless areas are found in 42 states and Puerto Rico, and they are home to recreation gems like the Pacific Crest Trail, which passes through several roadless areas in the Cascades and Sierras on the West Coast; alpine summits like Wyoming's Franc's Peak;



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

Montana's Hyalite Canyon, a world-renowned ice climbing destination; climbing and backcountry skiing at Washington Pass and Liberty Bell at the Headwaters of Washington's Methow Valley; mountain biking on the Maah Daah Hey Trail in western North Dakota, Kettle Crest of Washington, and Tea Creek Mountain in West Virginia; stellar hiking and camping adjacent to the Dolly Sods and Otter Creek Wilderness in West Virginia; and paddling in the headwaters of the Gauley in the West Virginia Highlands and headwaters of the Lochsa in Idaho.

While we oppose any elimination of roadless protections in Alaska, we are also concerned that those changes would set a precedent for additional attacks on Roadless Areas across the country. The Roadless Rule continues to provide invaluable protections for outdoor recreation opportunities across the country, and we ask you to oppose inclusion of related riders in upcoming spending legislation.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Brady Robinson, 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
Scott Robson, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club

