



July 28, 2020

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman, House Natural Resources
Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources
Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop and Members of the Committee:

The Coalition for Outdoor Access (COA) urges members of the House Natural Resources Committee to vote in favor of the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (ANS) for the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act, H.R. 3879 ["SOAR Act"] when it is marked up by the committee on July 29, 2020. The ANS will increase recreational opportunities and improve recreation management on federal lands and waters and provide vital support to the outdoor recreation economy.

COA is a broad alliance of businesses and organizations with first-hand knowledge of the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land management agencies. The Coalition came together in 2014 to improve the operation of these systems for the benefit of the agencies, the recreational landscapes they support, the organizations who provide facilitated recreational experiences on federal lands and waters, and for the members of the public who use these services. Our members include for-profit and nonprofit outfitters and guides, university recreation programs, volunteer-based clubs, and the conservation advocacy community. The COA Steering Committee includes representatives from the following organizations:

- [American Mountain Guides Association](#)
- [Angler's Covey](#)
- [Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education](#)
- [The Mountaineers](#)
- [National Outdoor Leadership School](#)
- [REI](#)
- [YMCA](#)
- [The Wilderness Society](#)

The Coalition supports the ANS because it will enable more people to get outdoors, improve recreation management, and bolster the outdoor recreation economy. If enacted, the bill will:

- **Increase recreational access** by making much-needed changes to the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal agencies to enable more people to experience the outdoors with the help of an outfitter, guide or other outdoor leader. Among other things, these changes would:
 - **Increase flexibility for outfitters, guides and other outdoor leaders** by allowing them to offer activities that are substantially similar to the activity specified in their permit.
 - **Maximize existing recreation opportunities** by extending the term of temporary outfitter-guide permits and creating a program for sharing unused service days.

- **Simplify the permitting process for guided trips involving multiple agencies** by authorizing the agencies to issue a single multijurisdictional permit.
- **Improve recreation management** by increasing the availability of federal recreation passes and by directing the agencies to evaluate land managers based on the achievement of recreation and tourism goals.
- **Expand recreation opportunities** by encouraging the agencies to extend seasonal recreation opportunities and promoting outdoor recreation and outdoor employment for veterans of the Armed Forces.
- **Improve recreational trail conditions** by establishing an interagency trail management plan and promoting volunteer stewardship to address maintenance needs.

Of particular note, the recreation permitting provisions in Title 1 of the ANS have broad bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and are supported by more than 100 recreation businesses and organizations across the United States (list on page 3).

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support the ANS at markup and favorably report the amended SOAR Act to the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for Outdoor Access Steering Committee:

Jeannette Stawski, Committee Chair
Executive Director
Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education
Ann Arbor, MI

Jonathan Williams
Public Policy Manager
National Outdoor Leadership School
Lander, WY

Betsy Robblee
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Jeremy Oyen
Manager, National Field Operations
REI
Kent, WA

David Leinweber
Chairman, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation
Alliance
Owner, Angler's Covey Inc.
Colorado Springs, CO

Paul Sanford
National Director of Recreation Policy
The Wilderness Society
Washington, DC

Title 1 of the SOAR Act ANS has been endorsed by a broad coalition of recreation organizations:

Aerie Backcountry Medicine
Alaska Alpine Adventures
Alaska Guide Collective
Alpenglow Expeditions
America Outdoors Association
America Walks
American Alpine Club
American Alpine Institute
American Camp Association
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Hiking Society
American Horse Council
American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education
American Mountain Guides Association
American Sportfishing Association
Angler's Covey
Appalachian Mountain Guides
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Archery Trade Association
Association for Experiential Education
Association of Marina Industries
Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education
Avid4 Adventure
Back Country Horsemen of America
Big City Mountaineers
Chicks Climbing and Skiing
Choose Outdoors
Colorado Mountain School
Colorado River Outfitters Association
Colorado Wilderness Corporate and Teams
Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides
Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions
Dude Ranchers Association
Estes Park Rock Climbing
Exum Mountain Guides
Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association
Holiday River Expeditions
Idaho Mountain Guides
Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Kent Mountain Adventure Center
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce
Los Alamos Mountaineers
Mazamas
Middle Fork Outfitters Association
Moab Desert Adventures
Montana Alpine Guides
Montana Mountaineering Association
Montana Outfitters and Guides Association
Montana Wilderness School
Mountain Skills Rock Guides
Mountain Trip
Nantahala Outdoor Center
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds
National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Outdoor Leadership School
National Shooting Sports Foundation
New Mexico Council of Guides and Outfitters
New Mexico Wild
New River Mountain Guides
No Barriers USA
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Open Lands Consulting LLC
Oregon Outfitters and Guides Association
Outdoor Alliance
Outdoors Alliance for Kids
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Outdoor Research
Outward Bound USA
Peak Mountain Guides
Red River Adventures
REI
Rising Tide Associates
RV Dealers Association
RV industry Association
Sawtooth Mountain Guides
San Juan Mountain Guides
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Santa Fe Climbing Center
Seneca Rocks Climbing School
Sierra Mountain Center
Sierra Mountain Guides
Sierra Mountaineering International
Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
Speciality Equipment Marketing Association
Suntoucher Mountain Guides
The Mountaineers
The Mountain Guides
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wilderness Society
Transforming Youth Outdoors
Utah Guides and Outfitters Association
Vetta Mountain Guides
Washington Trails Association
West Virginia Professional River Outfitters
Western River Expeditions
Western Spirit Cycling
Wilderness Education Association
Worldwide Outfitters and Guides Association
Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association
YMCA of Greater Seattle
YMCA of Los Angeles
YMCA of the USA