

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Julie Calder and I am the Board Chair for the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board, the Vice President of Guest Experience for Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, resident of Teton County for more than 25 years, a hospitality professional, and a mother of two teenage girls. I am honored to be here to speak in support of reauthorizing the Great American Outdoors Act.

In Wyoming, tourism is more than an industry. It is a cornerstone of our economy and community well-being. In 2024, the leisure and hospitality sector employed more than 38,000 Wyomingites, the highest on record, and accounted for over 13% of all jobs in the state. Wages in this sector exceeded \$1.1 billion, continuing a trend of steady growth and providing meaningful opportunities for families across our state. In Teton County alone, travel generated \$1.7 billion in visitor spending and supported more than 8,400 local jobs. Without visitor-paid taxes, every household in Teton County would shoulder an additional \$9,800 in taxes annually to maintain current levels of public services.

The Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board manages 60% of visitor-paid lodging taxes, which totaled \$10.8 million in FY 2024. These funds support not only marketing and visitor services, but also core community priorities like public safety, fire and EMS, transportation, parks and recreation, and cultural preservation. We see ourselves as stewards of both the visitor experience and the community experience.

Our work is deeply connected to our federal land partners. Jackson Hole is fortunate to sit at the doorstep of Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the National Elk Refuge. Together, these lands welcome more than 4 million people each year. Our partnerships with the Park Service, the Forest Service, and our local government allow us to invest core stewardship initiatives like visitor education, public land ambassadors, wildlife safety campaigns, and sustainable infrastructure - all designed to protect resources while ensuring a world-class visitor experience.

The business community has also embraced its role in this leadership, and at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort we see guest experience as central to that responsibility. In my role, I lead a team committed to delivering a world-class visit that balances high expectations with the realities of increased demand.

We've taken bold steps to manage the guest journey end-to-end, including modernizing reservation systems, implementing daily capacity limits, investments in transportation and parking, intentional limits on ticket and pass sales, and real-time digital communication that provides up to date information about the resort and conditions. These efforts ensure that service, safety, and enjoyment remain paramount even as visitation grows.

Just as importantly, JHMR works closely with partners, from Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest to the Travel & Tourism Board, Chamber of Commerce, and local

hospitality industry, to create a seamless destination experience. While this process is not always easy or simple, years of collaboration and innovation have positioned us to continue leading with guest experience at the heart of everything we do. And these approaches demonstrate how public and private sectors can work together to balance access, sustainability, and economic vitality.

The Great American Outdoors Act has been essential in addressing deferred maintenance needs on our public lands, ensuring safe roads, maintained trails, and functioning facilities that visitors and residents alike rely on. But the need remains great. Continued funding is vital to sustain the recreation-based economy, to protect the extraordinary natural and cultural resources that draw millions of visitors, and to support the communities like ours that serve as gateways to these places.

People do not travel from across the globe to see something ordinary. They come to Jackson Hole to experience landscapes and wildlife found nowhere else on Earth - the sight of a moose wading in the Snake River, the sound of bugling elk in autumn, the view of the Tetons rising dramatically above the valley floor. Even a single animal can inspire worldwide attention. Grizzly 399, who raised multiple litters of cubs in view of park visitors, became a national celebrity and a living symbol of why this ecosystem is so treasured. These experiences are irreplaceable. As a community, we take pride in our role as stewards of this uniqueness, ensuring that it endures for future generations.

In closing, I urge the Committee to renew the Great American Outdoors Act. It is an investment not only in public lands, but in the people, communities, and economies that depend on them. It is an affirmation of our shared responsibility to protect what is most unique, most beautiful, and most defining about our country.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to America's great outdoors.