



*Protecting the places you love to hike*

May 13, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: American Hiking Society's Support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727**

Dear Rep. Connolly,

On behalf of the American Hiking Society, our members, supporters, and the millions-strong hiking community, we write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727 and urge the Natural Resources Committee to hold a public hearing on the legislation.

The Complete America's Great Trails Act seeks to realize the goal of the National Trails Systems Act (NTSA), to create a complete and connected system of trails across the country. In 2018, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the NTSA however, even after fifty years, our National Scenic Trails have incomplete and unprotected sections that place hikers and the hiking experience at risk.

Currently there are 11 National Scenic Trails throughout the US, stretching approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Trails on private lands, without access agreements, face unique obstacles in long term planning and management to complete and maintain trails. Unforeseen circumstances, such as changes in property ownership, can lead to section closures and loss of hiker access.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who chose to protect sections of trail by donating a permanent conservation easement for recreational trail use. Under an easement, current and successive private landowners continue to own the property but the trail gaps are avoided – that's a win-win for both landowners and trail users. It's important to note that no land owner would ever be forced to give up land. This bill would simply allow those who choose to do so to take advantage of the tax benefit that such an easement would provide.

National Scenic Trails provide unmatched access for hiking and other outdoor recreation and are a national treasure. We urge the committee to fulfill the vision of the National Trails System Act and take a step toward completing and protecting these treasures.

Please contact Tyler Ray, Director of Policy and Advocacy, [tray@americanhiking.org](mailto:tray@americanhiking.org), 301-565-6704 x705 with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tyler Ray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tyler Ray  
Director of Policy and Advocacy



Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the National Scenic Trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these privately-hosted sections of trail are vulnerable over time as ownership or landowner financial needs change. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail sections intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

As the managing organization for 95 miles of the New England Trail, and over 350 miles of the Appalachian Trail, AMC recognizes the critical importance of the National Trails System for community access to the outdoors as well as its significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached at [hclish@outdoors.org](mailto:hclish@outdoors.org) or 617-391-6580, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Heather Clish  
Director of Conservation & Recreation Policy

**AMC Headquarters:** 10 City Square • Boston, MA 02129-3740 • 617-523-0636 • [outdoors.org](http://outdoors.org)

**Northampton Office:** 72 Center Street • Northampton, MA 01060

**Regional Headquarters:** Pinkham Notch Visitor Center • 361 Route 16 • Gorham, NH 03581-0298 • 603 466-2721

**Additional Offices:** • Bethlehem, PA • Bretton Woods, NH • Greenville, ME • New York, NY • Brunswick, ME



# APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY®

May 13, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and our more than 40,000 members, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session. H.R. 1727 would offer a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of trail corridor for recreational trail use forever.

The ATC is a national conservation organization committed first and foremost to the maintenance and management of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Founded in 1925 as the Appalachian Trail Conference, the ATC cares for the 2,192 miles of the Trail from Georgia to Maine with approximately 6,000 volunteers from 31 maintaining clubs in each of the 14 States with a portion of the Trail. The A.T., like many trails throughout the NTS, is located on a mix of federal, State, and private land. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

Including the A.T., there are 11 National Scenic Trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across State, federal, municipal, and private lands. These trails, part of the National Trails System (NTS), provide individuals of all background, experience levels, and capability the opportunity to get outside and enjoy the beauty and differences of the environment. Human beings by design crave a connection to the natural world and the NTS is for many one of their best opportunities to be in nature. Approximately three million people got on to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T. or Trail) in 2018 alone!

While all the lands on which the A.T. are located are preserved, the margins from the center line of the A.T. to the end of the protected area(s) are sometimes quite narrow. In some places, the "Trail Corridor" is essentially preserved in perpetuity. In others, there remain serious risks not only to the viewshed (the area visible from the Trail), but to the lands immediately surrounding

the Trail (the “Trail Corridor”) and, in some cases, the very lands on which the Trail is located. Many of the lands surrounding the A.T. provide important habitat for American wildlife; the Trail Corridor has immense natural as well as scenic value.

In addition to the benefits to human health and well-being and wildlife and landscape conservation, National Scenic Trails are important for outdoor recreation, including the significant impact on local economies such activities bring. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails. Outdoor recreation is a valuable economic tool to all sorts of communities, but particularly for those areas along the Trail with transitioning economies, making the best use of their natural resources to attract visitors interested in experiencing the Wild East™ within a few hour’s drive of the East Coast’s major metropolitan areas is critical. Voluntary measures to preserve natural landscapes are essential to allowing an outdoor experience.

Approximately 20% of the NTS (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who either choose to host these special trails or are subject to a previous owner’s easement. For those trails not covered by an easement, the access granted by the landowners is precarious and potentially impermanent. Even iconic trails like the A.T. are not immune to encroachment. Appropriate incentives for private landowners are needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact. Just compensation, such as in the form of a tax credit, for allowing current and future generations of outdoor recreators will facilitate the preservation of the outdoors and the promotion of outdoor lifestyles to the benefit of American health and well-being.

H.R. 1727 offers an attractive incentive for those who would like to preserve the natural state of their lands while facilitating access for others to the Great Outdoors. Easements are a transfer of only a section of one’s property rights, and, in cases such as those gained from H.R. 1727’s enactment, entirely voluntary. If an easement is used, a private landowner continues to own the property and the trail would also remain connected—that’s a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

Legislation like H.R. 1727 provide important tools to conserve and promote public lands, healthy Americans, and robust economies. Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email at [BMysliwicz@AppalachianTrail.org](mailto:BMysliwicz@AppalachianTrail.org) or via phone at 207-370-0450.

Sincerely,

Brendan Mysliwicz  
Director of Federal Policy and Legislation  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy

May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Arizona Trail Association I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act (H.R. 1727) and strongly encourage you to hold a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public. The 800-mile Arizona National Scenic Trail was built primarily by volunteers over a 30-year period and is now one of our state's greatest natural resources and economic drivers.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, and the Arizona Trail have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of all national scenic trails (over 4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to allow these special trails to cross their property. However, these landowners can also choose not to host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact. We can't afford gaps in the National Trail System.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail in perpetuity. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached anytime if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew J. Nelson".

Matthew J. Nelson  
Executive Director  
(520) 404-7992 [matthew@aztrail.org](mailto:matthew@aztrail.org)

cc: Congressman Raúl Grijalva





Audubon | CONNECTICUT



Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly:

On behalf of Audubon Connecticut, the Connecticut office of the National Audubon Society, and the Connecticut Audubon Society we are writing in strong support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. Our conservation network extends statewide and includes more than 19,500 members, five Connecticut chapters, and many partners along the Atlantic Flyway.

Through our conservation programs focused on Bird-Friendly Communities, Coasts, Climate, Advocacy, and Working Lands / Healthy Forests, we are working to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national, and global concern—like the Piping Plover, Wood Thrush, and Field Sparrow. It begins with birds, but our mission connects people to a much wider range of issues, such as preventing air and water pollution, reducing pesticide use, promoting land conservation and reducing the impact of global climate change on birds, wildlife, and people.

Founded in 1898 and with more than 7,000 members the Connecticut Audubon Society protects Connecticut's environment by inspiring conservation action. We connect people to birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, habitat improvement and environmental advocacy. We work to improve habitats for species of conservation concern throughout the state and provide meaningful opportunities for our members and the public to make a difference for birds, other wildlife and habitats. We operate seven nature education centers statewide to inspire and empower Connecticut's diverse human population with inclusive and accessible educational opportunities which promote a sense of belonging and community through the enjoyment of nature while providing a sound foundation for positive environmental action.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

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National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

H.R. 1727 would offer the type of incentive for powerful on-the-ground conservation that our conservation network strongly supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Patrick Comins can be reached by email via [pcomins@ctaudubon.org](mailto:pcomins@ctaudubon.org) phone via 203-259-0416 x107

Or Leslie Kane can be reached by email: [lkane@audubon.org](mailto:lkane@audubon.org); or phone 203-494-7980 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Comins, Executive Director  
Connecticut Audubon Society



Leslie Kane, Managing Director  
National Audubon Society Connecticut Office



May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Arizona Trail Association I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act (H.R. 1727) and strongly encourage you to hold a public hearing this session.

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However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, and the Arizona Trail have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of all national scenic trails (over 4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to allow these special trails to cross their property. However, these landowners can also choose not to host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact. We can't afford gaps in the National Trail System.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached anytime if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Matthew J. Nelson  
Executive Director  
(520) 404-7992 [matthew@aztrail.org](mailto:matthew@aztrail.org)



cc: Congressman Raúl Grijalva





# Berlin Land Trust, Inc.

May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Berlin Land Trust, Inc. located in Berlin CT and holding lands with portions of the New England Scenic Trail, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [archs4@gmail.com](mailto:archs4@gmail.com) or phone via (860) 604-1263, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Archacki, Jr – Board of Directors, Berlin Land Trust



# Berlin Land Trust, Inc.

May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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Sincerely,

Raymond J. Archacki, Jr – Board of Directors, Berlin Land Trust



*Connecting people to the land since 1895*

16 Meriden Road  
Rockfall  
Connecticut 06481-2961  
Tele: 860-346-TREE  
[www.ctwoodlands.org](http://www.ctwoodlands.org)

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

5/10/2019

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA), I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact. This is especially the case on the New England National Scenic Trail where approximately 40% of the Trail in both Connecticut and Massachusetts is hosted on private land. CFPA maintains the Connecticut stretch of the New England Trail.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [ehammerling@ctwoodlands.org](mailto:ehammerling@ctwoodlands.org) or phone via 860-346-TREE, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Hammerling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "H".

Eric Hammerling  
Executive Director

# CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

May 9, 2019  
Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [abpaterson@ctconservation.org](mailto:abpaterson@ctconservation.org) or phone via (860) 852-5512, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director







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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Hammerling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "H".

Eric Hammerling  
Executive Director



Connecticut Fund  
for the Environment

Save the Sound®

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2019

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and urge you to hold a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Connecticut is fortunate to have two national scenic trails. The Appalachian Trail stretches 51 miles through the northwest corner and the 215-mile New England National Scenic Trail stretches through 41 Connecticut communities from Long Island Sound to Massachusetts. In fact, the NE National Scenic Trail just celebrated its 10-year anniversary! Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian and others can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose not to host these trails in the future. This makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

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Respectfully submitted,

Melissa J. Schlag  
[mschlag@ctenvironment.org](mailto:mschlag@ctenvironment.org)

*Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) is a non-profit organization with thousands of members and over 10,000 committed activists. CFE, our bi-state program Save the Sound, and its SoundKeeper protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring citizens together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.*

900 Chapel Street | Upper Mezzanine | New Haven, Connecticut 06510 | 203-787-0646 | [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org)  
545 Tompkins Avenue | 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Mamaroneck, New York 10543 | 914-381-3140 | [www.savethesound.org](http://www.savethesound.org)

# CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

May 9, 2019  
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2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
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However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [abpaterson@ctconservation.org](mailto:abpaterson@ctconservation.org) or phone via (860) 852-5512, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director







May 13, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Continental Divide Trail have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [tmartinez@continentaldividetrail.org](mailto:tmartinez@continentaldividetrail.org) or phone via 303.996.2759, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Martinez".

Teresa Martinez  
Executive Director  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition

**Completing, promoting and protecting the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail**

CDTC • 710 10<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 200, Golden, CO 80401 • [www.continentaldividetrail.org](http://www.continentaldividetrail.org) • (303) 996-2759

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# Continental Divide Trail Society

3704 N. Charles St. (#601) Baltimore MD 21218 410/235-9610

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May 13, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Continental Divide Trail Society, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

For the most part, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail passes through public lands administered by the Forest Service, the Park Service, or the Bureau of Land Management. Some desirable trail sections, however, are not protected in this manner. Our hope is that arrangements might be made with private landowners that would authorize the trails to be located across their properties. (Otherwise, trail users might be forced to hike along undesirable routes such as busy highways with speedy and dangerous traffic.)<sup>1</sup> We believe that in many cases the owners would gladly host the trails in the future so long as this would not unduly interfere with their own use and enjoyment of their lands. We believe an incentive for private landowners might be extremely helpful in securing their agreement to a trail route that, in the terms of the National Trails System Act, would "provide for maximum outdoor

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<sup>1</sup> See CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL SOCIETY, IBLA 93-634 (1997) – in the absence of an easement (to be granted in Jackson County, Colorado, incident to a proposed exchange of certain public lands), the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail has been located on paved, well-traveled, Colorado Highway 14.

recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.”

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by granting a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use. If an easement is used, in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 1244(a)(5), a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected as it passes through a desirable setting – that’s a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [jim@cdtsociety.org](mailto:jim@cdtsociety.org) or by phone via 410-235-9610, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Continental Divide Trail Society

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James R. Wolf, Director



Audubon | CONNECTICUT



Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly:

On behalf of Audubon Connecticut, the Connecticut office of the National Audubon Society, and the Connecticut Audubon Society we are writing in strong support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. Our conservation network extends statewide and includes more than 19,500 members, five Connecticut chapters, and many partners along the Atlantic Flyway.

Through our conservation programs focused on Bird-Friendly Communities, Coasts, Climate, Advocacy, and Working Lands / Healthy Forests, we are working to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national, and global concern—like the Piping Plover, Wood Thrush, and Field Sparrow. It begins with birds, but our mission connects people to a much wider range of issues, such as preventing air and water pollution, reducing pesticide use, promoting land conservation and reducing the impact of global climate change on birds, wildlife, and people.

Founded in 1898 and with more than 7,000 members the Connecticut Audubon Society protects Connecticut's environment by inspiring conservation action. We connect people to birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, habitat improvement and environmental advocacy. We work to improve habitats for species of conservation concern throughout the state and provide meaningful opportunities for our members and the public to make a difference for birds, other wildlife and habitats. We operate seven nature education centers statewide to inspire and empower Connecticut's diverse human population with inclusive and accessible educational opportunities which promote a sense of belonging and community through the enjoyment of nature while providing a sound foundation for positive environmental action.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

H.R. 1727 would offer the type of incentive for powerful on-the-ground conservation that our conservation network strongly supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Patrick Comins can be reached by email via [pcomins@ctaudubon.org](mailto:pcomins@ctaudubon.org) phone via 203-259-0416 x107

Or Leslie Kane can be reached by email: [lkane@audubon.org](mailto:lkane@audubon.org); or phone 203-494-7980 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Comins, Executive Director  
Connecticut Audubon Society



Leslie Kane, Managing Director  
National Audubon Society Connecticut Office



May 12, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of Fairfax Trails and Streams, I write to support H.R. 1727, the Complete America's Great Trails Act.

With the passage of H.R. 1727, landowners who own key "gap" properties along National Scenic Trail corridors will be encouraged to donate trail right-of-way in return for tax savings. This is a win-win situation, for the property owner and the trail-using public. It may be the only way to secure a continuous route for the nation's eleven national scenic Trails.

Thank you for pursuing this bill with such enthusiasm!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William P. Niedringhaus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William P. Niedringhaus  
President, Fairfax Trails and Streams  
805 N. Croydon St.  
Sterling, VA 20164

May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Arizona Trail Association I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act (H.R. 1727) and strongly encourage you to hold a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public. The 800-mile Arizona National Scenic Trail was built primarily by volunteers over a 30-year period and is now one of our state's greatest natural resources and economic drivers.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, and the Arizona Trail have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of all national scenic trails (over 4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to allow these special trails to cross their property. However, these landowners can also choose not to host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact. We can't afford gaps in the National Trail System.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail in perpetuity. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached anytime if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew J. Nelson".

Matthew J. Nelson  
Executive Director  
(520) 404-7992 [matthew@aztrail.org](mailto:matthew@aztrail.org)

cc: Congressman Raúl Grijalva





May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Congressman Connolly,

The Ice Age Trail Alliance's (Alliance) mission is to create, support and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. On behalf of the Alliance, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. There are approximately 500 miles of gaps in the Ice Age Trail gaps and more than 100 current 'handshake' trail hosts. These landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. The public lost three miles of Ice Age Trail just last week due to such a closure. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [Mike@iceagetrail.org](mailto:Mike@iceagetrail.org) or phone, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael Wollmer  
Executive Director/CEO

PO Box 128  
2110 Main Street  
Cross Plains, WI 53528

608.798.4453  
[iceagetrail.org](http://iceagetrail.org)





July 15, 2009

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly  
327 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Connolly:

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) writes to provide its official support for H.R. 1912, Complete America's Great Trails Act. This bill will greatly assist efforts to connect finished sections of our National Scenic Trails.

IMBA is a national and international education and advocacy organization with 750 affiliate clubs, 32,000 individual members, and more than 450 corporate partners and dealer members. IMBA creates, enhances, and preserves trail experiences for mountain bikers worldwide. Based on a recent Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) study, 39.3 million Americans 16 and older rode bicycles on narrow trails (singletrack) in 2004. This makes mountain biking the second largest trail user group in the country.

Mountain bicyclists support National Scenic Trails for many of the same reasons as hikers, equestrians and other non-motorized users. These important trails bring us closer to nature and develop within us an appreciation of the great outdoors. We value the healthy forests and clean waters that run along the trails, and seek the solitude and challenge they offer.

IMBA members are prolific volunteers, donating approximately one million hours of volunteer labor annually to our public lands. Nationally and locally, mountain biking organizations work closely with like-minded groups to create, restore and protect valuable trails, including several National Scenic Trails. The Complete America's Great Trails Act will provide volunteers with outstanding opportunities to give back to these precious national resources.

Thank you for introducing this proposed legislation. IMBA and its local affiliates are truly appreciative and offer our support to make H.R. 1912 a reality.

Sincerely,

Jenn Dice  
Government Affairs Director

*IMBA.com • PO Box 7578 • Boulder • CO • 80306 • 303.545.9011 • 303.545.9026*





May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of Kestrel Land Trust, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

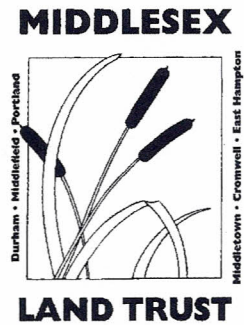
H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

Kestrel Land Trust recognizes the powerful positive impact trails make on people's health and happiness by bringing them in contact with the natural world. The government would provide a critically valuable service to Americans by helping to ensure the permanence of iconic trail systems that inspire people to get outdoors. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Christine Volonte  
Conservation & Stewardship Manager  
*Land Management, Nature Retreats & Trails*

MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST, INC.  
27 WASHINGTON STREET  
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457  
[www.middlesexlandtrust.org](http://www.middlesexlandtrust.org)



May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

I am writing on behalf of the Middlesex Land Trust to support the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and in support of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately twenty percent of the national scenic trail system is located on private lands by landowners who generously choose to host these special trails. However, at any time these landowners can choose to not host these trails, and this makes these trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

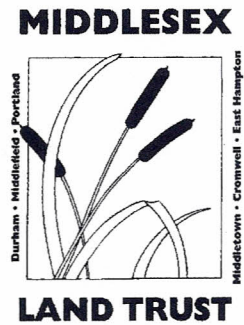
Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [dbrown@middlesexlandtrust.org](mailto:dbrown@middlesexlandtrust.org) or phone at 860/343-7537 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Brown  
Executive Director



MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST, INC.  
27 WASHINGTON STREET  
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457  
[www.middlesexlandtrust.org](http://www.middlesexlandtrust.org)



May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

I am writing on behalf of the Middlesex Land Trust to support the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and in support of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately twenty percent of the national scenic trail system is located on private lands by landowners who generously choose to host these special trails. However, at any time these landowners can choose to not host these trails, and this makes these trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [dbrown@middlesexlandtrust.org](mailto:dbrown@middlesexlandtrust.org) or phone at 860/343-7537 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Brown  
Executive Director



May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the North Country Trail Association I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public and to complete those that are not yet done, like the North Country National Scenic Trail, the longest trail in the system.

We cannot achieve the goals set forth by Congress in the National Trails System Act without partnership with private landowners and H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email at [aketchmark@northcountrytrail.org](mailto:aketchmark@northcountrytrail.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Andrea Ketchmark  
Executive Director  
North Country Trail Association

229 E. Main St, Lowell, MI 49331 e [hq@northcountrytrail.org](mailto:hq@northcountrytrail.org) [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org)

toll-free 866-445-3628 ph 616-897-5987 fax 616-897-6605



May 10, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the North Country Trail Association I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public and to complete those that are not yet done, like the North Country National Scenic Trail, the longest trail in the system.

We cannot achieve the goals set forth by Congress in the National Trails System Act without partnership with private landowners and H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email at [aketchmark@northcountrytrail.org](mailto:aketchmark@northcountrytrail.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Andrea Ketchmark  
Executive Director  
North Country Trail Association

229 E. Main St, Lowell, MI 49331 e [hq@northcountrytrail.org](mailto:hq@northcountrytrail.org) [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org)

toll-free 866-445-3628 ph 616-897-5987 fax 616-897-6605





May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Old Spanish Trail Association-Tecopa (CA) chapter, I 'm writing in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public. Although the Old Spanish Trail is a National Historic Trail, designated as such by Congress in 2002, the same priority applies.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly

*John W. Hiscock, Association Manager P.O Box 324 Kanab, UT 84741  
Phone: 435-689-1620 E-Mail: ostamgr@gmail.com*

vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected - that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [jackprichett@ca.rr.com](mailto:jackprichett@ca.rr.com) or phone via 310.895-4747 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Prichett".

Jack Prichett,  
President, OSTA-Tecopa chapter

P.S. Letterhead is outdated—typical problem of a not-for-profit organization.  
See [www.oldspanishtrail.org](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org).



# Pacific Crest Trail Association

May 9, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727**

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of the Pacific Crest Trail Association and our 13,300 members, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing on this bill this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across 30 states and the District of Columbia and see millions of visitors every year. Administrated by federal agencies, these public access trails cross federal, state, municipal, and private lands. Designated by Congress, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) stretches from Mexico to Canada and provides for outdoor recreation and preservation of nationally significant scenic, natural, historic and cultural treasures in California, Oregon, and Washington.

Like other national scenic trails, sections of the PCT still pass through private lands, leaving approximately 10 percent of the PCT unprotected and vulnerable to incompatible land uses and restricted access. H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who might voluntarily make land contributions to help complete the permanent protection of the PCT and other national scenic trails.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation and also significantly affect local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email at [mwargo@pcta.org](mailto:mwargo@pcta.org) or phone at 415-516-3126, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Megan Wargo*

Megan Wargo  
Director of Land Protection





May 12, 2019

Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

The Potomac Heritage Trail Association, whose main mission is to advocate for the completion of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST), strongly supports the passage of H.R. 1727, the Complete America's Great Trails Act. We would like to see this legislation advanced without delay.

The PHNST, the only national scenic trail to pass through a major suburban/urban area, has a number of gaps owned by private owners. Providing them tax benefits for allowing trail use on their property may be the best way to secure a continuous route for the PHNST and the other ten national scenic trails.

Thank you for pursuing this bill with such enthusiasm!

Sincerely,

William P. Niedringhaus  
President, Potomac Heritage Trail Assoc.  
805 N. Croydon St.  
Sterling, VA 20164



Washington, DC Office  
100 M Street SE  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20003

Creating parks and  
protecting land for people  
tpl.org

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Gerald Connolly  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of The Trust for Public Land, I am writing in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and hope that it may be considered for a hearing soon by either the House Natural Resources Committee or House Ways and Means Committee.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation. As a considerable portion of the national scenic trail system is found on privately held land, this legislation would help ensure permanent protection of the trail resource.

America's eleven national scenic trails stretch about 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for authoring this legislation, as well as for working with Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, who is the chief sponsor of the Senate version, S. 809. We look forward to working with you to advance this bill during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy DeCoster", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathy DeCoster  
Vice President and  
Director of Federal Affairs



Congressman Gerald Connolly  
2238 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly,

On behalf of Working Lands Alliance and the American Farmland Trust, I write in support of the Complete America's Great Trails Act, H.R. 1727, and of holding a public hearing this session.

There are 11 national scenic trails in the U.S. that together stretch approximately 20,000 miles across state, federal, municipal, and private lands, including farm and ranch lands. Because of their prominence and use, it is a national priority to keep these special trails connected and available for the public.

However, even iconic national scenic trails like the Appalachian, Continental Divide, or Pacific Crest Trails can have sections of trail corridor that are not protected. Approximately 20% of the national scenic trail system (~4,000 miles) is hosted by private landowners, many of them farmers and ranchers, who choose to host these special trails. However, these landowners can also choose to not host these trails in the future, and this makes these privately hosted trail sections particularly vulnerable. An incentive for private landowners is needed to keep these nationally treasured trail corridors intact.

H.R. 1727 would offer the powerful incentive of a tax credit to private landowners, including farmers and ranchers, who protect sections of trail by donating a conservation easement on part of their property to protect the use of the trail corridor for recreational trail use forever. If an easement is used, a private landowner would continue to own the property, and the trail would also remain connected – that's a win-win for both landowners and the nation.

National scenic trails are important for outdoor recreation, and also make a significant impact on local economies. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation nationally generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually and sustains 7.6 million American jobs, and much of this outdoor recreation is associated with using trails.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I can be reached by email via [cgazillo@farmland.org](mailto:cgazillo@farmland.org) or phone via 707-495-8223, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Gazillo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsea Gazillo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Working Lands Alliance Director