



June 16, 2020

The Honorable Debra A. Haaland  
Chair  
House Committee on Natural Resources,  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,  
and Public Lands  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Don Young  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources,  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,  
and Public Lands  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and Members of the Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee:

On behalf of our more than one million members and supporters, The Wilderness Society (TWS) writes to express our views on the bills being heard before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on June 16, 2020.

**H.R. 244, the Advancing Conservation and Education Act**

TWS supports H.R. 244, the Advancing Conservation and Education Act, by Representative Stewart. H.R. 244 provides new opportunities to exchange state trust lands out of America's parks, wilderness, and other conservation areas, thus benefiting America's public lands as well as schools and local economies. This legislation would help to expedite the elimination of state inholdings in wilderness, parks, and conservation sites, preventing incompatible development within these areas. Additionally, the bill would afford new economic development opportunities and provide new sources of revenue for schools.

H.R. 244 is classic "win-win" legislation. It will preserve lands with outstanding ecological and recreational value, improve local economies, and benefit public schools. TWS supports this legislation and urges the committee to advance it.

**H.R. 5040, Aerial Incursion Repercussion Safety Act of 2019**

TWS supports H.R. 5040, the Aerial Incursion Repercussion Safety Act, sponsored by Representatives Curtis and Huffman. This bill would direct the Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service to study the effects of drone trespassing on wildfire suppression and related costs. When unauthorized drones are flown near wildfire areas, they can interfere with firefighting efforts and force fire crews to ground their own drones and helicopters. This puts first responders in danger, and wastes valuable time and resources that would otherwise go toward fire suppression. TWS urges members of the committee to support H.R. 5040, which aims to help avoid future drone incursions.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Drew McConville  
Senior Managing Director, Government Relations  
The Wilderness Society