

Statement of Representative Blake Moore

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3113, H.R. 3670,

H.R. 3686, and H.R. 3687

June 8, 2021

Thank you all for the opportunity to be here today. I would like to acknowledge and thank Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman, Chairman Neguse, and Ranking Member Fulcher for holding today's hearing and allowing me to testify on my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3113, the MAPLand Act.

Our great nation is blessed with some of the most scenic landscapes in the world. Those who live in and visit my home state of Utah know that some of life's best memories can be made on a raft in the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, on a trail in Arches National Park, or on a hunt in the High Uintas.

Each year, millions of Americans take advantage of the unrivaled beauty and grandeur of our nation's outdoor spaces. This number grows each year. Outdoor recreation not only improves the health and quality of life of millions, but it also represents an important sector of the American economy. According to estimates from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor industry's economic output is roughly \$788 billion, and the industry supports more than 5.2 million jobs nationwide.

Our ability to recreate on our lands is wholly reliant on our ability to access these lands. Public lands that provide recreation opportunities can be found in every state. Infrastructure

investments, mobile devices, and other innovations have made access to these lands easier than ever.

However, there are still obstacles in the way that restrict our ability to enjoy these lands.

In some cases, this is due to mixed public and private land ownership. In other circumstances, outdated, inconsistent, and unreliable data sources prevent users from accessing lands. To illustrate this point, reports indicate that tens of thousands of easement records are still only held on paper files.

I introduced the MAPLand Act with my good friends Representatives Fulcher, Neguse, and Schrier to fix this. If passed, the MAPLand Act would direct federal land management agencies to digitize and standardize mapping records so that Americans can use modern technology to access critically important information about how to access our public lands. This would help land users better understand which lands are open to the public, the status information on whether certain roads are open, which vehicles are allowed in certain areas, and much more.

Not only would the MAPLand Act improve our ability to recreate, but it would also help us more fully understand the access challenges we face across the country. For example, a recent study by onX and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership identified 9.5 million acres of federal land in the west that are inaccessible because they are landlocked by private landowners. Modernizing and making our data more accessible can help us locate management issues and take necessary corrective action.

The MAPLand Act will enhance equitable access and help Americans from all walks of life enjoy our outdoor spaces. For a family interested in visiting a pristine location, the MAPLand Act will help give them the tools they need to avoid nearby private properties and create a memorable experience together.

For a fisherman who wants to enjoy a morning on the river, the MAPLand Act will facilitate access to better data about public access points along the river. The list goes on. To illustrate this, Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous consent to enter into the record three letters that list more than 100 organizations and groups that support the MAPLand Act.

Making it easier for Americans to recreate on our federal lands will also improve our ability to fund important conservation programs that enhance and protect habitats across the nation. It will also ensure that agencies are able to make the most of the funding they receive through the Great American Outdoors Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

GPS data has revolutionized outdoor recreation. As technology has improved, so too has our ability to enjoy the world around us. The MAPLand Act will help us continue in this direction and will ensure that millions of Americans are able to enjoy our outdoor spaces as much as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for allowing me to be here today and I yield back.