



**AMERICAN
SPORTFISHING
ASSOCIATION**

November 29th, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, House Committee on Natural
Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

RE: The EXPLORE Act

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), thank you for introducing and holding a hearing on the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act, or EXPLORE Act. As the trade association for the recreational fishing industry, ASA provides the industry a unified voice when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect business or sportfishing itself. Our members include manufacturers, retailers and allied organizations that comprise the \$148 billion recreational fishing economy. We urge the Committee to pass the EXPLORE Act because it would help modernize and enhance management of, and access to, our nation's public lands, benefiting recreational fishing and other outdoor recreation activities.

The introduction of the EXPLORE Act is timely and comes on the heels of the latest U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis report, which showed that in 2022, the outdoor recreation economy generated \$1.1 trillion in economic output, comprised 2.2% of U.S. GDP, and supported 5 million jobs — 3.2% of all employees in the country. Outdoor recreation has been proven to boost the health of the economy and Americans, and access to public lands is crucial for millions of anglers to enjoy the outdoors.

There is much to support in this broad-based legislation that seeks to improve recreational opportunities across all federal land management agencies. ASA particularly supports provisions to modernize and improve accessible trails and campgrounds, improve visitation data collection and reporting, slow the spread of aquatic invasive species, and increase youth participation in outdoor recreation. Passage of the EXPLORE Act will help ensure that the sportfishing industry, and the recreation economy in general, continues to grow.

We are grateful for the ongoing work of the Committee to advance legislation that will strengthen the management and conservation of the nation's public lands and waters. We look forward to working with the Committee on this and other important measures that benefit the recreational fishing industry and America's anglers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Leonard".

Mike Leonard
Vice President of Government Affairs

American Sportfishing Association

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