



December 1, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act, which was introduced in the House this week. This legislation provides meaningful funding to build outdoor recreation opportunities across the country by expanding the time federal lands are open to the public, investing in specific recreation infrastructure like biking trails and trailhead facilities, and utilizing real-time data to extend the outdoor recreation season. Investments like these will have a real impact on the ability of all Americans to spend time outside and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the outdoors and the outdoor recreation economy for the introduction of this bill.

Outdoor recreation is a cornerstone of American life and a pillar of our economy, contributing more than [\\$1.1 trillion](#) to our economy and supporting 5 million jobs. Increased support for outdoor recreation through federal investments in recreation infrastructure and public parks – like those proposed in your legislation – are critical to the continued success of our businesses and the outdoor industry.

Millions of Americans turned to the outdoors, including more women, more urban-dwellers, and more ethnically diverse individuals to find refuge during these difficult times. Yet, more than 100 million Americans still do not live within walking or biking distance of a park. Now more than ever, people are experiencing the physical and mental health benefits of getting outside, and Congress can take action to support this newfound shift to the outdoors by supporting this act.

Outdoor Industry Association represents hundreds of outdoor businesses across the country, and our members proudly support the provisions outlined in the EXPLORE Act, which come from numerous past recreation bills. These include, but are not limited to, the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act and Recreation Not Red Tape Act (RNR), which would further increase access to the outdoors by simplifying the permitting process for public lands and cutting regulatory red tape that creates barriers to recreation; the Outdoors for All Act,



which would benefit underserved communities by creating inclusive outdoor recreation programs that bring economic and health benefits to low-income neighborhoods; and the Gateway Community and Recreation Enhancement Act, which would provide technical assistance and development opportunities to the communities that are the gateways to our cherished public lands.

By increasing Americans' access to outdoor spaces and recreation, these bills will provide meaningful economic opportunities to countless communities and local outdoor industry businesses. Following several years of COVID-19 related lockdowns and economic stress, these proposals would help strengthen the outdoor industry while improving the mental, physical, and economic well-being of everyone, regardless of zip code, background, or income.

We thank you for your continued dedication to the outdoors, and we look forward to working with you to ensure Congress passes this bill and President Biden signs it into law.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Ebersole".

Kent Ebersole  
President  
Outdoor Industry Association

**About the Outdoor Industry Association**

*Based in Boulder, Colo., with offices in Washington, D.C., Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is a catalyst for meaningful change. A member-based collective, OIA is a passionate group of business leaders, climate experts, policy makers and outdoor enthusiasts committed to sustainable economic growth and climate positivity while protecting - and growing access to - the benefits of the outdoors for everyone. For more than 30 years, OIA has catalyzed a thriving outdoor industry by supporting the success of every member company across four critically aligned areas: market research, sustainability, government affairs, and inclusive participation. OIA delivers success for its members through education, events, and business services in the form of solutions and strategies, consultation, collaboration, and opportunities for collective action. For more information, visit [outdoorindustry.org](https://outdoorindustry.org)*