

Statement on EXPLORE Act
The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Federal Lands Subcommittee Hearing
November 30, 2023

- **Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time and your partnership on this important legislation.**
- **I'm pleased to be here, discussing a renewed, bipartisan effort to continue the conversation around outdoor recreation on our public lands.**
- **The American people's love of our public lands and spending time outdoors is growing every year. Recreation has been a boon for local economies and job creation.**
- **But our public land management agencies also must have the tools, resources, and staff they need to keep up.**
- **The EXPLORE Act is a much-needed starting point for making sure we have improved, more equitable access for recreational pursuits.**
- **This legislation holds the potential to be a significant bipartisan win. I am pleased that key provisions**

sponsored by House Democrats are in this package, including Congresswoman Barragan's legislation, *The Outdoors for All Act*.

- Recreation and being outdoors is important for both our mental and physical health. This isn't something that should be reserved for just a select few.
- Everyone should have easy access to the outdoors and the benefits they provide.
- We must ensure that urbanized and densely populated communities, which have historically been left out of the recreation conversation, are a part of this legislation.
- That's why I'm excited that the EXPLORE Act permanently authorizes the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program so that urban and low-income communities can continue to access federal support for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- The outdoors are for all.
- I want to make clear that this legislation is a work in progress.

- **This hearing today is an important step in that process.**
- **I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and working with my Republican colleagues to consider any changes that are recommended by our partners.**
- **We will need to continue this discussion beyond today's hearing with federal land management agencies, outdoor recreation industry interests, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders about the impacts of outdoor recreation in federal lands; including how to best protect and preserve public lands.**
- **To close, I would also like to emphasize that as we move forward with this legislation, we must prioritize conservation, access, and restoration to uplift the protected places that are the backbone of the outdoor recreation economy.**
- **Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.**

