



Statement for the Record on behalf of REI Co-op
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Submitted to the House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Hearing on EXPLORE America250: Celebrating One Year of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor
Recreation Experiences Act
January 20, 2026

Dear Chairman Westerman, Chairman Tiffany, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on the one-year anniversary of the EXPLORE Act. REI Co-op worked on many of the provisions within the EXPLORE Act for years and we are eager to see its implementation and the impacts of this important legislation.

The EXPLORE Act represents the most consequential outdoor recreation policy enacted in decades, establishing a national framework for expanding access to public lands and enhancing recreation experiences across the country. Some of the key provisions include:

- Improving outdoor access for current and past military service members, individuals with disabilities, and kids.
- Streamlining the permitting process for outfitters and guides and reducing fees for small businesses.
- Coordinating federal agencies to support and promote outdoor-based missions, from recreation to conservation and management.
- Protecting rock-climbing in some of the sports' most iconic places and creating new long-distance bike trails.
- Addressing outdated and lacking infrastructure in gateway communities, and funding outdoor infrastructure in underserved communities.

One year after enactment, we are excited to see this important legislation turn into tangible results on the ground. Coordination across federal agencies and partners is essential to sustain momentum and ensure that the benefits of the EXPLORE Act reach communities nationwide. Continued support – including adequate funding for agencies, adequate staffing, and promised new recreational infrastructure – is critical to fulfil the law's intent.

This hearing is a testament to Congress's commitment to ensure that this law provides real benefits to people who love the outdoors. We ask the committee to continue to conduct oversight, work with the Appropriations Committee on resources, and continue to highlight the important work of agency implementation.