

STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS  
REGARDING  
H.R. 7979, PUBLIC LANDS ACCESS RESTORATION ACT  
H.R. 7951, LONG-TERM GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY ACT

MARCH 26, 2026, 2PM

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee and present the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s views on H.R. 7979, the Public Lands Access Restoration Act and H.R. 7951, the Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act.

**H.R. 7979, “Public Lands Access Restoration Act”**

The Department continues the important work of implementing President Trump's recreation and conservation vision, which includes a renewed focus on increasing access for motorized recreation across the National Forest System. Secretary of Agriculture Rollins recently took critical action to rescind the Roadless Rule, which has stymied access for all kinds of motorized use. USDA is also working to rescind or revise the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule to further unleash recreation access. Outdoor recreation continues to grow, and millions of people rely on the Forest Service for access. Expanding motorized and nonmotorized access and improving visitor experience is one of our highest priorities.

The Public Lands Access Restoration Act would establish a presumption that Forest Service roads and trails designed for motorized access would be open to motorized access unless the roads or trails are signed closed and incorporated into official maps. Additionally, the agency would be required to publish the maps for public comment and review them at regular intervals. This Act would cover National Forest roads and trails systems, but not roads or trails authorized by legal rights-of-way held outside of the National Forest System. Finally, the Forest Service would be required to accept proposals submitted by the public for additions to designated motorized road and trail networks and to consider them within 90 days.

The Department supports the goals of the Public Lands Access Restoration Act and would like to work with the sponsor and the Committee to discuss further implications of the bill and to provide technical assistance. The Department would like to work with the sponsor and

subcommittee to retain appropriate discretion to protect public safety, critical infrastructure investments, valid existing rights, and permitted activities, including those potentially affecting our hunting conservation and ranching communities. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on the Public Lands Access Restoration Act. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to refine this important effort.

**H.R. 7951, "Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act"**

The Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act makes several technical corrections and amends the Agricultural Act of 2014 and the EXPLORE Act to establish that good neighbor agreements to carry out authorized restoration services and authorized recreation services may be entered into for a term of up to 20 years.

USDA supports this bill. The Department anticipates that longer-term agreements will encourage industry to make investments that support active forest management, restoration and recreation. The Department also anticipates longer-term agreements will contribute to a consistent and increasing supply of wood products in line with Executive Order 14225 ("Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production"). Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on the Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions the Subcommittee might have.