

May 22, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Democratic Leader Schumer, and Republican Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations, which represent millions of hunters, anglers, other conservationists, and fish and wildlife professionals, write to express our strong support for both the *America's Conservation Enhancement* (ACE) Act and the *Great American Outdoors Act* (GAOA). We strongly support inclusion of both bills in a future COVID supplemental bill or enactment under regular order.

Both bills enjoy broad, bipartisan support and contain important job creation components that are crucial to restarting the American economy. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the outdoor recreation industry, which includes hunting and fishing, generated \$778 billion in output, accounted for 2.2 percent of GDP, supported 5.2 million jobs, and was growing faster than the economy as a whole.

The outdoors is an ideal place to keep safe distances while allowing educational and recreational experiences in keeping with the #ResponsibleRecreation campaign that promotes social distancing practices in accordance with the recommendations of public health officials. More than ever citizens will be seeking access to these lands for a variety of reasons, including hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, boating, climbing, and other outdoor activities. Americans need to get outside to preserve physical and mental health; gateway communities would greatly benefit from the certainty this investment would provide to their economies.

The *Great American Outdoor Act*, S. 3422, will provide improved access by funding the backlog of federal maintenance for roads, trails, piers, campsites, parking lots, boat ramps, and other recreational infrastructure. A study estimates that addressing the backlog in our national parks alone would create or support nearly 110,000 infrastructure-related jobs. As visitors return to our national parks and federal lands, Congress can ensure these special places will be safe, accessible and ready to help generate tourist dollars in local communities. Further, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is critical to providing robust access to our public lands and recreational opportunities. For example, the program protects working forests and species habitat, enhances the vitality of gateway communities, and provides resources for state parks and community recreation facilities that also support the outdoor recreation economy.

The *ACE Act*, H.R. 925, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent, includes high-priority conservation provisions that will leverage public and private funding as well as lead to significant job creation. For example, the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* reauthorization has leveraged more than \$1.6 billion into \$4.68 billion since its inception in 1989.

We respectfully urge you to enact the *America's Conservation Enhancement Act* and the *Great American Outdoors Act*. Thank you for your consideration and continued service on behalf of America's outdoor heritage.

Sincerely,

Angler Action Foundation
Archery Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association
American Woodcock Society
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S)
The Bass Federation, Inc
Boat U.S.
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl
Campfire Club of America
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
The Conservation Fund
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Fishing League Worldwide
Fly Fishers International
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
Houston Safari Club
International Game Fish Association
Izaak Walton League of America
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wildlife Federation

National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion – The Hunter’s Institute
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Sportsmen’s Alliance
Student Anglers Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
The Wildlife Society
The Walleye Federation, LLC
Whitetails Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Mississippi