

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE



October 2, 2013

Congressman Rob Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
123 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
1511 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Tomorrow's Subcommittee Legislative Hearing

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of five national, member-based organizations that includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, and Winter Wildlands Alliance. Tomorrow, the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation is conducting a legislative hearing on eleven bills. This letter shares our thoughts on two of them: H.R. 3188, the "Yosemite Rim Fire Emergency Salvage Act" and H.R. 2657, the "Disposal of Excess Federal Lands Act of 2013."

Yosemite Rim Fire Emergency Salvage Act

This summer's Yosemite Rim Fire was a harrowing experience that brought the challenges of managing forest fires on treasured public lands into especially sharp focus for the human powered outdoor recreation community. We are delighted with Congress' interest to help rehabilitate and restore the landscapes impacted by fire. However, the Yosemite Rim Fire Emergency Salvage Act seeks to do this independent of longstanding federal statutes essential to the management of our public lands, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act and the Federal Land Policy Act. The bill also dispenses with any administrative or judicial review as well as public notice and comment.

While providing special attention to the aftermath of a forest fire involving an iconic national park may be warranted, bypassing bedrock public land management and public engagement laws will likely do more harm than good.

Disposal of Excess Federal Lands Act of 2013

In certain cases, disposing federal lands can make a great deal of sense; management challenges can be lessened and landscapes can become less fragmented. However, requiring the sale of federal parcels in western states inventoried in a 16 year-old database is not be the best approach to disposing federal lands. Much has changed since 1997 and we have a fundamentally different understanding of the economic value of public lands, especially in the West. Given the importance of these public lands to West's outdoor recreation economy, any

design to dispose of these parcels must, at a minimum, rely on current data. In addition, given that healthy, accessible public lands generate jobs and attract workers, it may be possible that strategically reinvesting funds generated by the thoughtful disposition of federal lands into *other* federal lands (whether key acquisitions, easements, habitat restoration, or recreational access) may have a greater impact reducing the public debt than merely directing the funds to the U.S. Treasury.

Thank you for considering our perspectives.

Best regards,

Brady Robinson
Executive Director
Access Fund

Wade Blackwood
Executive Director
American Canoe Association

Mark Singleton
Executive Director
American Whitewater

Michael Van Abel
Executive Director
International Mountain Bicycling Association

Mark Menlove
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Adam Cramer
Policy Architect
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