

Jan 24, 2017

115th Congress
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned hunting, fishing, conservation, and outdoor-industry organizations and businesses represent millions of American sportsmen and women who oppose the recently passed House rules package that profoundly undervalues our national public lands.

This move to alter the process of scoring legislation meant to sell or transfer federally managed lands eases the path forward to dismantle our uniquely American system of public lands. By designating land-transfer legislation as budget-neutral, and eliminating existing safeguards against undervaluing public lands, our nation's greatest asset has been stripped of its true value. We want to be perfectly clear: American sportsmen and women are strongly opposed to giving away our public lands birthright.

Our nation's public lands—including our national forests, BLM lands, and national wildlife refuges—shape our national identity. They are critical to the future of hunting, fishing, and wildlife, and the sustained economic health of communities bordering these lands. More than 72 percent of Western hunters and 36 percent of all American hunters depend on public lands for their access. Millions of anglers use public lands and waters. Public lands are a necessity to the \$646-billion outdoor-recreation economy, and 6.1 million American jobs depend on these lands.

If public lands were sold or transferred to state or private entities, our very way of life would be in jeopardy, and Theodore Roosevelt's legacy would be at risk.

We recognize that the management of public lands presents challenges. We also acknowledge that some specific parcels of public lands have been legitimately identified for disposal, just as some lands have been identified for acquisition. We encourage you to focus on constructive and inclusive solutions to these issues. To that end, our community is committed to working with the 115th Congress to foster collaboration and to improve the long-term management of America's greatest asset—the lands that belong to all of us.

Sincerely,

- American Fly Fishing Trade Association
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Hispanic Access Foundation

- Izaak Walton League of America
- National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
- National Deer Alliance
- National Marine Manufacturers Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- National Wildlife Refuge Association
- Outdoor Industry Association
- Pope and Young Club
- Pheasants Forever
- Public Lands Foundation
- Quail Forever
- Quality Deer Management Association
- Snook and Gamefish Foundation
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Trout Unlimited
- Whitetails Unlimited
- Wildlife Management Institute