

August 25, 2022

Honorable Martin Heinrich  
United States Senate  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable James Risch  
United States Senate  
483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich and Senator Risch:

Clean water is essential for America's booming outdoor recreation economy. Supporting over \$887 billion in consumer spending and 5.2 million jobs, this industry is here to stay and will continue to support communities across the country.

Everything from commercial river recreation to rafting, kayaking, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing and more, depend on the cold, clean waters that course through our streams and rivers, and fill our wetlands and lakes. Unfortunately, many miles of those waterways are impaired by pollution from abandoned mines. We write to you today in support of Good Samaritan legislation that would speed up restoration of America's waterways degraded by abandoned mine pollution.

Over 110,000 stream miles in the U.S. are listed as impaired due to heavy metal concentrations and/or high acidity, with mine pollution being a significant contributing factor. Moreover, there are hundreds of thousands abandoned mines throughout the western United States, an estimated 33,000 of which are degrading the environment, including contaminating surface and groundwater.

While the Federal government can use a Superfund action to clean up some of these abandoned mines, Superfund only addresses the worst cases while hundreds of smaller abandoned mines bleed toxic pollutants every day. State agencies, county governments, conservation organizations and watershed groups want to tackle smaller cleanup efforts. However, under federal law, those who have no legal responsibility or connection to an abandoned mine – Good Samaritans – are deterred from cleaning up these messes due to the immense liability risks and onerous standards.

In most cases, these cleanups will greatly improve water quality, but meeting high EPA water quality standards may not be feasible nor cost effective, leaving the Good Samaritan on the hook, forever, for any remaining pollution. In short, the law does not distinguish between those who cause pollution and those who want to clean it up. The result is that these leaking abandoned mines continue to degrade our water, day after day, year after year.

We can solve this conundrum by passing legislation that provides bona fide Good Samaritans liability protections while also holding them accountable to terms of their permits. Abandoned mines are a big problem, but Good Samaritan legislation will allow qualified groups to help tackle work desperately needed across the United States.

The undersigned outdoor recreation businesses and associations fully support S. 3571, the *Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2022*. We thank you for your leadership and urge you to double down on efforts to pass this vital legislation in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

Outdoor Alliance  
Washington, D.C.

American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA)  
Bozeman, MT

Simms Fishing Products  
Bozeman, MT

Northwestern River Supply (NRS)  
Moscow, ID

Yeti  
Austin, TX

Scott Fly Rods  
Montrose, CO

Sitka Gear  
Bozeman, MT

RIGS Fly Shop  
Ridgway, CO

Rio Fly Lines  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Ross Reels  
Montrose, CO

Sage Fly Rods  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Airflo Fly Lines  
Montrose, CO

RepYourWater  
Erie, CO

Durangers Flies & Supplies  
Durango, CO

San Juan Angler  
Durango, CO

Reddington  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Angler's Covey  
Colorado Springs, CO

Fly Water Travel  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Angling Trade Magazine  
Boulder, CO

Confluence Casting  
Gypsum, CO

Sweetwater Travel Co.  
Livingston, MT

Fly Fishers International  
Livingston, MT

Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
Colorado Springs, CO

O'Dell Brewing  
Ft. Collins, CO

Tenkara USA  
Boulder, CO

Abel Reels  
Montrose, CO

Trouts Fly Fishing  
Denver, CO

Umpqua Feather Merchants  
Louisville, CO

Bauer Fly Reels  
Twin Bridges, MT

RL Winston Fly Rods  
Twin Bridges, MT

Taos Fly Shop  
Taos, NM

Mossy Creek Fly Fishing  
Harrisonburg, VA

Dette Flies  
Livingston Manor, NY

Ramsey Outdoor Store  
Ramsey, NJ

North Fork Ranch Guide Service  
Shawnee, CO

Maxxon Outfitters  
Kent, WA

Anglers All  
Littleton, CO

The Caddis Fly Angling Shop  
Eugene, OR

Streamtech Boats  
Boise, ID

Last Exit Goods  
Steamboat Springs, CO

Waterworks – Lamson  
Boise, ID

Wingo Outdoors  
North Adams, MA

Dun Magazine  
Dover, TN

The Reel Life  
Santa Fe, NM

Yellow Dog Flyfishing Adventures  
Bozeman, MT

Seek Outside  
Grand Junction, CO

AFFTA Fisheries Fund  
Bozeman, MT

Moldy Chum  
Seattle, WA

Vedavoo  
Leominster, MA

Aire Boats  
Meridian, ID

Adipose Boatworks  
Helena, MT

Outcast Sporting Gear  
Meridian, ID

Tight Line Media  
Idaho Falls, ID

First Lite  
Ketchum, ID

Wide Angle Art  
St. George, UT

Elko Fly Shop  
Elko, NV

Tactical Fly Fisher  
Springville, UT

Cheeky Fishing  
North Adams, MA

Fishwest  
Kamas, UT

CC:

Senator Tom Carper, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Senator Shelley Capito, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works