



July 28, 2020

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Chairman, House Natural Resources  
Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources  
Committee  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop and Members of the Committee:

The Coalition for Outdoor Access (COA) urges members of the House Natural Resources Committee to vote in favor of the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (ANS) for the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act, H.R. 3879 ["SOAR Act"] when it is marked up by the committee on July 29, 2020. The ANS will increase recreational opportunities and improve recreation management on federal lands and waters and provide vital support to the outdoor recreation economy.

COA is a broad alliance of businesses and organizations with first-hand knowledge of the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land management agencies. The Coalition came together in 2014 to improve the operation of these systems for the benefit of the agencies, the recreational landscapes they support, the organizations who provide facilitated recreational experiences on federal lands and waters, and for the members of the public who use these services. Our members include for-profit and nonprofit outfitters and guides, university recreation programs, volunteer-based clubs, and the conservation advocacy community. The COA Steering Committee includes representatives from the following organizations:

- [American Mountain Guides Association](#)
- [Angler's Covey](#)
- [Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education](#)
- [The Mountaineers](#)
- [National Outdoor Leadership School](#)
- [REI](#)
- [YMCA](#)
- [The Wilderness Society](#)

The Coalition supports the ANS because it will enable more people to get outdoors, improve recreation management, and bolster the outdoor recreation economy. If enacted, the bill will:

- **Increase recreational access** by making much-needed changes to the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal agencies to enable more people to experience the outdoors with the help of an outfitter, guide or other outdoor leader. Among other things, these changes would:
  - **Increase flexibility for outfitters, guides and other outdoor leaders** by allowing them to offer activities that are substantially similar to the activity specified in their permit.
  - **Maximize existing recreation opportunities** by extending the term of temporary outfitter-guide permits and creating a program for sharing unused service days.

- **Simplify the permitting process for guided trips involving multiple agencies** by authorizing the agencies to issue a single multijurisdictional permit.
- **Improve recreation management** by increasing the availability of federal recreation passes and by directing the agencies to evaluate land managers based on the achievement of recreation and tourism goals.
- **Expand recreation opportunities** by encouraging the agencies to extend seasonal recreation opportunities and promoting outdoor recreation and outdoor employment for veterans of the Armed Forces.
- **Improve recreational trail conditions** by establishing an interagency trail management plan and promoting volunteer stewardship to address maintenance needs.

Of particular note, the recreation permitting provisions in Title 1 of the ANS have broad bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and are supported by more than 100 recreation businesses and organizations across the United States (list on page 3).

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support the ANS at markup and favorably report the amended SOAR Act to the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for Outdoor Access Steering Committee:

Jeannette Stawski, Committee Chair Executive Director Ass'n of Outdoor Recreation and Education Ann Arbor, MI	Courtney Aber National Director YMCA BOLD and GOLD Seattle, WA
Jonathan Williams Public Policy Manager National Outdoor Leadership School Lander, WY	Jeremy Oyen Manager, National Field Operations REI Kent, WA
Betsy Robblee Conservation and Advocacy Director The Mountaineers Seattle, WA	David Leinweber Chairman, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance Owner, Angler's Covey Inc. Colorado Springs, CO
Matt Wade Advocacy & Policy Director American Mountain Guides Association Boulder, CO	Paul Sanford National Director of Recreation Policy The Wilderness Society Washington, DC

**Title 1 of the SOAR Act ANS has been endorsed by a broad coalition of recreation organizations:**

Aerie Backcountry Medicine  
Alaska Alpine Adventures  
Alaska Guide Collective  
Alpenglow Expeditions  
America Outdoors Association  
America Walks  
American Alpine Club  
American Alpine Institute  
American Camp Association  
American Fly Fishing Trade Association  
American Hiking Society  
American Horse Council  
American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education  
American Mountain Guides Association  
American Sportfishing Association  
Angler's Covey  
Appalachian Mountain Guides  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Archery Trade Association  
Association for Experiential Education  
Association of Marina Industries  
Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education  
Avid4 Adventure  
Back Country Horsemen of America  
Big City Mountaineers  
Chicks Climbing and Skiing  
Choose Outdoors  
Colorado Mountain School  
Colorado River Outfitters Association  
Colorado Wilderness Corporate and Teams  
Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides  
Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions  
Dude Ranchers Association  
Estes Park Rock Climbing  
Exum Mountain Guides  
Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association  
Holiday River Expeditions  
Idaho Mountain Guides  
Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association  
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association  
Kent Mountain Adventure Center  
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce  
Los Alamos Mountaineers  
Mazamas  
Middle Fork Outfitters Association  
Moab Desert Adventures  
Montana Alpine Guides  
Montana Mountaineering Association  
Montana Outfitters and Guides Association  
Montana Wilderness School  
Mountain Skills Rock Guides  
Mountain Trip  
Nantahala Outdoor Center  
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds  
National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Outdoor Leadership School  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
New Mexico Council of Guides and Outfitters  
New Mexico Wild  
New River Mountain Guides  
No Barriers USA  
North Carolina Outward Bound School  
Open Lands Consulting LLC  
Oregon Outfitters and Guides Association  
Outdoor Alliance  
Outdoors Alliance for Kids  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable  
Outdoor Research  
Outward Bound USA  
Peak Mountain Guides  
Red River Adventures  
REI  
Rising Tide Associates  
RV Dealers Association  
RV industry Association  
Sawtooth Mountain Guides  
San Juan Mountain Guides  
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors  
Santa Fe Climbing Center  
Seneca Rocks Climbing School  
Sierra Mountain Center  
Sierra Mountain Guides  
Sierra Mountaineering International  
Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals  
Speciality Equipment Marketing Association  
Suntoucher Mountain Guides  
The Mountaineers  
The Mountain Guides  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
The Wilderness Society  
Transforming Youth Outdoors  
Utah Guides and Outfitters Association  
Vetta Mountain Guides  
Washington Trails Association  
West Virginia Professional River Outfitters  
Western River Expeditions  
Western Spirit Cycling  
Wilderness Education Association  
Worldwide Outfitters and Guides Association  
Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association  
YMCA of Greater Seattle  
YMCA of Los Angeles  
YMCA of the USA