

February 3, 2016

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
123 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20540

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
2464 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Outdoor Industry Association Stance on Utah's Public Land Initiative Discussion Draft**

Dear Congressman Bishop and Congressman Chaffetz,

We would like to express our gratitude to you, and your staff in particular, for the time, energy and resources that have gone towards crafting the Public Lands Initiative (PLI) over the past few years. We are pleased to see recreation interests were included in your on-the-ground approach to resolving land and water conflicts that are important to outdoor businesses in Utah, their customers and many others across the country whose inspiration, and customers have been, and we hope will continue to be, linked to Utah for decades.

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) represents thousands of manufacturers, suppliers and retailers that make up the growing \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy. Utah is critical to this growing sector with 122,000 Utah jobs directly related to the outdoor economy, Utahans spending \$12 billion on outdoor products, and as a home to over 60 outdoor industry companies.

Additionally, Outdoor Retailer held in Salt Lake City twice a year brought upwards of \$50 million to the local economy in 2015 and more than 50,000 visitors to the area. Recreation on Utah's public lands and waters is a cornerstone of Utah's economy and the outdoor recreation community.

As we focus on how the outdoor industry inspires healthy people, and creates healthy economies, we understand economic diversity is important, and the role that all of Utah's industries play in that diversification. However, we also realize that energy and mineral development near iconic recreation destinations, or extraction that is prioritized and expedited in adjacent areas, undermines the protections of these recreation assets we have fought so hard for throughout the PLI process.

Public Lands Solutions has done an excellent analysis on the discussion draft, as have some of our local recreation users and businesses. Since they are on the ground we have utilized their expertise, as well as our own understanding of the PLI discussion draft, to point out some of our biggest concerns with the proposed legislation:

- The discussion draft disregards the Moab Area Master Leasing Plan (MLP) proposed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). OIA was involved in this process and is supportive of the outcome as it allows for continued energy development while transitioning to a more sustainable economy through local zoning and fosters an understanding of what the highest priority use of the land is in a specific area. Acknowledging the Moab MLP in the PLI would move Utah's recreation assets, tourism destinations and gateway communities' economies to an updated model that would well serve Moab and other areas.

We also suggest that the PLI support areas outside of the Moab MLP through a similar planning process.

- The Antiquities Act and the Wilderness Act are fundamental laws that support the outdoor recreation industry, the recreation economy and important recreation assets that are in the national interest. Rollbacks of grazing, wildfire or air quality restrictions that seek to amend or are not aligned with the Wilderness Act or any diminishment of the Antiquities Act will not be supported by OIA.

Further, codifying existing grazing in other National Conservation Areas (NCA), and Recreation zones will likely negatively impact recreation.

- Another concern from our analysis of the PLI maps, is that many disputed roads in proposed Wilderness and other areas, such as proposed NCAs, would be codified, ignoring litigation still in the works.
- We are disappointed that Bluff area is left out of the Bears Ears NCA. The Bluff area has many recreation assets that need to be protected to ensure diversity for the local economy and recreation opportunities for future generations.
- The draft PLI fails to protect the San Juan River as a Wild & Scenic River. People come from across the world to raft the San Juan and it is an

important recreation asset that is worthy of Wild and Scenic protections.

Like you, we believe that economic development through energy and mineral extraction, conservation and recreation can co-exist. Further, as our outdoor recreation economy study reports, protecting recreation assets is, in fact, economic development. This is evident in Utah, with opportunities for a strong and sustainable future for recreation-based economic development and access to outdoor recreation that is the envy of the country, if not the world.

We hope to see the recommended changes in the Public Lands Initiative legislation when it is introduced and an improved balance between mineral and energy development and the recreation assets that are critical to Utah's, and the nation's, recreation economy. OIA prefers to support legislation as the first option to address these important issues and we hope to support PLI, but without several changes to this draft, OIA's energies must shift to other vehicles for protecting recreation in Southeast Utah. The outdoor recreation community has participated in this process in good faith but we cannot support a bill that undoes important pillars that are foundational to the growth and success of the outdoor recreation industry.

We look forward to continuing our productive dialogue and thank you again for your attention to the interests of the outdoor industry.

Sincerely,



Amy Roberts  
Executive Director  
Outdoor Industry Association