

Election 2016: Outcomes and opportunities and what it all means for the outdoor industry

By OIA Government Affairs

Trump wins, Republicans keep control of Congress. So what now?

The contentious 2016 campaign is over, but yesterday's stunning outcome has set a course for the United States that will play out for years to come. From international trade and U.S. manufacturing to immigration and defense policy, the two leading candidates diverged on nearly every issue.

This year's election, however, marked the first time that candidates, from the presidential race to several key House and Senate races, and even governor's races in Montana and Vermont, made the outdoor recreation economy and public lands a relevant campaign issue.

It is unclear whether President-elect [Trump's rhetoric](#) will translate to real policy. Trump has not significantly addressed America's public lands issues other than staking out conflicting positions on state takeover of federal land and giving an indication that he supports the sportsmen's community. It is likely his policies and political appointments will favor traditional energy—though they may include some clean energy development. And we expect him to focus more on extractive industries and less on conservation and climate change—as President Obama has done and as Secretary Clinton's platform proposed.

We expect, however, that OIA's message of the economic power of outdoor recreation will be well received by the Trump administration, as it has been among Republicans and Democrats across the country.

International trade was one of the central issues of the presidential campaign with Trump vowing to kill the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or withdraw from it; label China as a currency manipulator, raising the possibility of a trade war; and possibly leave the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We assume that as president, Trump will follow through on those promises, ushering in an unprecedented era of protectionism and anti-globalization in trade policy.

There is some possibility that Congress will take up a vote on TPP over the next few weeks in the lame-duck session and before the new Congress is seated, although there will be a strong push from the left and Trump supporters to prevent a vote.

Though we did not endorse a presidential candidate, [OIA made several endorsements and OIAPAC made campaign contributions](#) to Republicans and Democrats in several House and Senate races across the country based on their support for the outdoor recreation economy and other key issues for the outdoor industry.

All Politics Is Local

For the first time ever, OIA also endorsed state-level candidates and increased our engagement on ballot initiatives at the state and local level. Gubernatorial candidates in Montana and Vermont made outdoor recreation and support for the outdoor recreation economy key aspects of their campaigns. As more states seek opportunities to expand the outdoor recreation economy in their states, these two states have emerged as leaders of the movement.

Voters also approved OIA-supported ballot initiatives in Oregon and in Los Angeles County in California that will add significant financial resources toward getting more people outside. These ballot measures are just a couple of the more than 60 initiatives voters across the country supported, which will provide more than \$6 billion in support for parks and conservation.

OIA Endorsements: How'd We Do? By Andrew Pappas

This year, OIA and OIAPAC endorsed a bipartisan slate of 20 candidates – 15 in the U.S. House of Representatives and five in the U.S. Senate. These were candidates from both parties who regularly stand up for the outdoor industry and promote the outdoor recreation economy. The majority, 77 percent, of OIA-backed candidates won last night.

In addition to endorsing federal candidates, OIA, for the first time ever, endorsed two gubernatorial candidates. Both Steve Bullock (D-MT) and Sue Minter (D-VT) ran part of their campaigns on an outdoor recreation platform. We are excited to announce Governor Bullock won his race by a close margin, but unfortunately Sue Minter lost.

We also endorsed Measure A, a Los Angeles County, California, parks ballot measure as well as Measure 99, a statewide outdoor education ballot measure in Oregon, which both passed.

Here is the full list of candidates and their results.

SENATE

Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) was ultimately unsuccessful in one of the closest races in the nation. During her time in the Senate, she was the lead sponsor of the US OUTDOOR Act and worked across the aisle to support public lands, promote the outdoor recreation economy, and create a path forward to combat climate change. While she will be missed, OIA looks forward to working with Senator-elect Maggie Hassan (D-NH) to help grow the New Hampshire outdoor recreation economy.

Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) has been a champion for the outdoor recreation industry and visited outdoor businesses across Colorado as he campaigned to a landslide win in the battleground state of Colorado. From working to support outdoor

businesses to fighting for public lands, Senator Bennet has been a steadfast outdoorist, and we look forward to continuing to work with him.

Senator Richard Burr's (R-NC) race was also one of the closest in the nation. He has been a longtime champion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and has announced that during his last term, reauthorization and funding of the program will be a top priority. We look forward to continuing to work with him to ensure full funding for the program.

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) has been a longtime champion for the Washington outdoor recreation industry and outdoor businesses. She will be in Democratic leadership and in a position that will ensure important issues like public lands, the outdoor recreation economy and climate change will be addressed.

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) is one of the strongest and most consistent champions for the outdoor recreation industry and outdoor businesses in Oregon and across the country. His win exemplifies the importance of the outdoor recreation industry to the state, and we look forward to working with him to support outdoor businesses while also addressing key issues such as international trade, funding and access for outdoor recreation and climate change.

HOUSE

Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA) is a growing champion for the outdoor industry and the lead Democrat in the House on the REC Act, legislation to count the outdoor recreation industry's contribution to the U.S. economy. We were pleased to see him win reelection this year and look forward to working with him to promote the outdoor recreation economy in Virginia and nationwide.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) is another longtime champion for the outdoor recreation industry and is the lead Democrat in the House on the US OUTDOOR Act, legislation to eliminate import tariffs on certain outdoor performance outerwear. He is also one of the most vocal advocates for the bicycle industry. Blumenauer regularly works across the aisle to support outdoor businesses and supports our public lands. We look forward to continuing to work with him to grow the Oregon outdoor recreation economy.

Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) is an outdoor industry champion and has worked to support outdoor businesses and public lands. Her win means that we will continue to have a strong champion who understands the importance of public lands and combating climate change while also having an open door to outdoor industry businesses.

Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (D-WA) has consistently been a public lands advocate and worked to support OIA's balanced trade agenda. We are happy to see her win reelection and look forward to continuing to work with her in the next Congress.

Congressman Bob Dold (R-IL) lost his race but has been a Republican champion for public lands and outdoor businesses. He is willing to take a stand on important issues like climate change.

Congressman Derek Kilmer (D-WA) has consistently stood up to support outdoor businesses in his district and the Washington outdoor recreation economy as a whole. We look forward to working with him to address important outdoor recreation issues including the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFFA).

Congressman Ron Kind (D-WI) has long worked to support the outdoor industry and lead on important industry initiatives by working across the aisle. Wisconsin has a robust recreation economy, and it is great to have his leadership in the state. His victory will allow us to continue to work with him to support outdoor businesses and protect public lands.

Congressman Pat Meehan (R-PA) has been a key Republican leader in supporting the outdoor recreation industry in Pennsylvania. He knows the importance of supporting public lands and addressing important issues such as climate change while also understanding the need to support outdoor businesses. We look forward to continuing to work with him to support the outdoor recreation economy.

Congressman Scott Peters (D-CA) represents a diverse district in Southern California and has consistently found ways to work across the aisle to protect public lands while supporting and growing outdoor businesses. We look forward to continuing to work with him to grow the California outdoor recreation economy.

Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) is a champion for the outdoor industry and represents the district where OIA's Boulder headquarters are located. He has taken a lead to bring the industry voice to D.C., both to support public lands as well as strengthen outdoor businesses and the outdoor recreation economy. He is a true friend of the outdoor industry, and we look forward to continuing to work with him.

Congressman Dave Reichert (R-WA) has been a leader for outdoor industry values in Washington, D.C., and in supporting Washington state's outdoor recreation economy. He is the lead sponsor of the US OUTDOOR Act in the House and has helped support and grow outdoor businesses while also protecting public lands and working to address climate change.

Congressman Mike Simpson (R-ID) has been a public lands champion and a strong supporter of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and he represents the Idaho outdoor industry well. We look forward to working with him to protect public lands and support outdoor businesses and the outdoor recreation economy.

Congressman Ryan Zinke (R-MT) has taken a stand for public lands, resigning from the Republican platform committee in protest of the GOP position in support of selling off public lands. He is also a strong supporter of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and a balanced trade agenda, and he works to support outdoor businesses across Montana. We look forward to working with him to support the industry's issues and the outdoor recreation economy.

Doug Owens (D-UT) lost his race but ran on a strong outdoor recreation economy and public lands agenda. It was great to see him bring these issues to his race. We hope to work with Congresswoman Love (R-UT) to further her understanding of the importance of the outdoor recreation industry in her district.

Gail Schwartz (D-CO) lost her race in Colorado's third congressional district but made public lands and the outdoor recreation economy the focal point of her campaign, making it a part of the debate. While the outcome is disappointing, her ability to have both candidates focus on public lands and take stances on the outdoor recreation economy is a great step forward for the outdoor industry and for our public lands. We hope Congressman Tipton (R-CO) will seize the opportunities to grow the outdoor recreation economy.

State Races and Local Ballot Initiatives

By Cailin O'Brien-Feeney

For the first time, OIA endorsed candidates for state office. We also backed ballot initiatives that invest in outdoor recreation, parks, and getting kids outside. While Washington, D.C., often is mired in partisan bickering, great policy work is being done at the state and local level – from state offices of outdoor recreation to leaders in communities across the United States who recognize that investing in the outdoor industry is an investment in healthy communities and healthy economies.

These candidates and ballot issues aren't the only ones we tracked this election season, but they are the ones we believe best reflect the growing recognition of the power of the outdoor recreation economy. We look forward to deepening our engagement at the state and local level in the coming year.

Governor Steve Bullock (D-Montana)

Outdoor Industry Association's endorsement of Governor Bullock in his reelection bid – along with Sue Minter in Vermont's gubernatorial race – mark OIA's first endorsements for statewide elected office and reflect an increased attention to the importance of outdoor recreation issues to voters. Governor Bullock campaigned strongly on public lands and outdoor recreation issues, including creation of a statewide Office of Outdoor Recreation. These issues resonated with Montanans, who elected Governor Bullock to a second term over Republican challenger Greg Gianforte.

Sue Minter (D-Vermont)

In Vermont, Sue Minter lost the race for governor to Republican Phil Scott who received 53 percent of the vote. Sue had pledged to elevate the role of the outdoors in her administration as well as work to improve access and connectivity for a variety of outdoor activities – we look forward to working with Governor-elect Scott on similar priorities.

Measure A, LA County, California

This ballot initiative, also known as the “Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks, Open Space, Beaches, Rivers Protection, and Water Conservation Measure,” will inject much-needed life and funding into one of our country’s most populous and park-poor regions. Passing with 73% percent of the vote, Measure A is a parcel tax that will provide stable, long-term funding to maintain, improve and expand LA County’s 3,000 parks.

Measure 99, Oregon

Outdoor School for All, formally known as Measure 99 to Oregon voters, passed yesterday with roughly 2/3 in favor and 1/3 opposed (final votes are still being counted). This ballot initiative is the first of its kind nationally to guarantee a week of outdoor education to every fifth- or sixth-grader in the state and is hopefully an indication of a trend recognizing the importance of connecting young people with nature. Outdoor School for All will be funded through the Oregon lottery.

What’s Next?

OIA will continue to analyze the election results and will send President-elect Trump’s transition team our recommendations for key political appointments and policy priorities. There is growing recognition, however, that the outdoor recreation industry will be one of our nation’s most powerful economic drivers and that the outdoor recreation economy depends on investment in our public lands and waters, a balanced approach to international trade and government regulations and real action to address the immediate threat of climate change.

OIA is the only organization that represents the business interests of the outdoor industry, while staying firmly rooted in our industry’s shared values of conservation and stewardship of our public lands and waters. That’s a powerful combination and message for policymakers from all parties.

As we prepare to launch the newest version of the Outdoor Recreation Economy in the spring of 2017, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to shape a future that reflects those interests and those values.

Join us. [Sign up for government affairs policy alerts](#) or come to the [2017 OIA Capitol Summit](#) on April 26th.

Whether it is at the White House or U.S. Capitol, the statehouse, or city council, OIA is here to help you and your business.