Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington , D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

We write to request that future economic relief and stimulus legislation aimed at positioning the economy to ramp up include support for our country's outdoor economy. The outdoor recreation industry supports 5.2 million jobs across the country and contributes 2.2 percent to our national gross domestic product, and the last few years it has grown faster than the economy as a whole. The continued success of the outdoor industry is closely tied to our public lands and waters, including federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), and the success of local, county and state governments.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, local governments, land management agencies, and outdoor businesses are facing difficult decisions. Many businesses operating on public lands, such as ski areas, outfitter and guide operations, and concessionaires, have already closed, limited visitors, and lost revenue. At the same time, counties and local governments are required to limit tourists and redirect local resources to fighting COVID-19. Even before this pandemic, counties were forced to spend local dollars on law enforcement, seasonal rangers, and wildfire mitigation on federal lands. With COVID-19 stressing local and county budgets even more than normal, local governments would benefit from a federal funding infusion for our public lands. We urge you to reinvest in our recreation infrastructure, including roads, trails and other facilities, to support Colorado communities and sustain the national outdoor economy for years to come.

While there is much work in the months ahead, we request that you consider the following in future economic packages:

- Fee Waivers for special use permit holders such as ski areas, outfitters and guides, campground and marina operators, and other small businesses to sustain their businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. Waivers would help maintain cash flows during this

time, as most businesses should be starting their busy months, and encourage businesses to retain staff to enable a quick recovery when the pandemic ends.

- <u>Flexibility for Permit Holders</u> which could include deferrals, delays, contract extensions, and other measures, as appropriate, to mitigate the loss of business due to steps taken to address COVID-19.

- <u>Recreation Infrastructure</u> including supplemental funding for recreation, roads, trails, and related infrastructure accounts at the USFS and DOI to ensure that any fee waivers or lost revenues do not undercut local government or agency budgets. Additionally, the inclusion of S.3422, the Great American Outdoors Act would be a significant investment in the outdoor recreation economy and benefit states and local communities throughout the nation.

- <u>Disaster Prevention and Mitigation</u> by investing in Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration, Watershed Health, Hazardous Fuels, and other programs at the USFS and DOI that reduce fire risk, while ensuring that resources are available for wildfire response and post-fire recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on these priorities.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael F. Bennet   /s/ Cory Gardner
United States Senator   United States Senator

/s/ Diana DeGette   /s/ Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress   Member of Congress

/s/ Joe Neguse   /s/ Jason Crow
Member of Congress   Member of Congress