



**BAMBA**  
Boise Area Mountain Bike Association



August 27, 2013

Senator Chuck Winder  
Idaho State Legislature  
State Capitol Building  
Post Office Box 83803  
Boise, ID 83720-0081

Representative Lawrence Denney  
Idaho State Legislature  
State Capitol Building  
Post Office Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0038

**RE: Federal Land Transfer and Outdoor Recreation**

Dear Senator Winder and Representative Denney,

As a diverse collection of groups representing outdoor recreation in the Boise area and throughout Idaho, we write to express significant concerns with the efforts to transfer federal public lands to state control, initiated by House Concurrent Resolutions 21 and 22. Like many Idahoans, our thousands of members and supporters throughout the state enjoy camping, hiking, paddling, mountain biking, rock climbing, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing on public lands. We believe that transferring federal public lands to the state will undermine or potentially eliminate access to outdoor recreation, and therefore threaten the many benefits, economic and otherwise, that recreation brings to the state.

According to HCR 22, the Federal Lands Interim Committee will examine "the extent to which public land may be sold." Once sold, access to outdoor recreation could be cut off, with public lands no longer in public hands. Even barring the outright sale of public lands, the state cannot match the level of funding necessary for the fire mitigation, land management and recreation infrastructure maintenance that make recreation access possible. Federal budgets for these and other prerequisites for access are shrinking as it is, and state control would only make the problem worse.

Our current system of federal land management largely facilitates outdoor recreation access and the benefits it brings. Indeed, most people in Idaho feel that Federal management of public lands is effective. 73% of Idaho voters agree that preserving and protecting our natural heritage by managing public lands is one of the things the Federal government does well<sup>1</sup>. Federal public lands are managed for multiple uses, with systematic processes for public input. While not perfect, Federal ownership and management is, has been and will continue to be supportive of outdoor recreation.

Access to outdoor recreation means big business in Idaho. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$6.3 billion and 77,000 jobs every year, as well as \$461 million in state and local tax

<sup>1</sup> IDAHO OUTDOOR BUSINESS COUNCIL, "IDAHO VOTERS AND PUBLIC LANDS POLL", AUGUST 2012

<sup>2</sup> OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: TAKE IT OUTSIDE FOR

revenue<sup>2</sup>. Harder to measure but no less important, outdoor recreation contributes to healthy, vibrant communities that attract businesses and talented employees.

From Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land in the Boise Foothills to marquee landscapes like Hells Canyon and the Sawtooths, Idaho enjoys a rich and accessible outdoor heritage. Transferring these public lands to state control risks their outright sale and continued underfunding, and threatens outdoor recreation access and all its associated benefits. As the Committee makes its recommendations, please take into account the effects on outdoor recreation in Idaho. We would be pleased to meet with members or staff of the Federal Lands Interim Committee to discuss this matter.

Best regards,

Phil Powers  
Executive Director  
American Alpine Club

Brad Nelson  
Board President  
Boise Area Mountain Bike Association

Brian Fedigan  
Board President  
Boise Climbers Alliance

Kevin Lewis  
Conservation Director  
Idaho Rivers United

Cailin O'Brien Feeney  
Policy Director  
Winter Wildlands Alliance

Michael Lanza  
Outdoor Writer and Author

Tom Flynn  
Grasstops Director  
Outdoor Alliance

Cc: Federal Lands Interim Committee

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<sup>2</sup> OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: TAKE IT OUTSIDE FOR AMERICAN JOBS AND A STRONG ECONOMY (2012).