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TO: Federal Lands Interim Committee
% Legislative Services Office
Research and Legislation
P.O. Box 83720, Boise ID 83720-0054

COMMENTS re. the proposal for the State of Idaho to take over national public lands:

In 2009, *Outdoor Life* magazine named Lewiston the best city in the nation for hunters and anglers seeking a variety of high quality fishing and big game opportunities DUE TO THE NEARBY ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC LANDS. That accessibility also draws local and out-of-state hikers, 4-wheel recreationists, cross country skiers, snowmobilers, backcountry horse riders, kayakers, campers, birders, berry pickers, photographers, and more. In other words, national public lands mean shared public use of American assets owned by all.

Their existence is a celebration of American values, such as freedom and individualism. Yet some of the ideologues who fly the flags of those values are the very same people now calling for weakening our — everyone's — freedom to enjoy America's public lands assets. How strange that *Outdoor Life* recognizes those assets for the gems that they are while Idaho's ideologues waste our money trying to diminish those assets with 'state ownership;' aka 'grabbing' those all-American assets in order to give them to 'the few.'

America's public lands belong, not in the hands of the few, the ideologues and their cohorts—the profiteers, but in the hands of those who have invested in keeping these lands public — all Americans. Public lands are an investment in cost-sharing for the benefit of all. The returns, indeed, grow greatly when we consider the tremendous benefit to Idaho of outdoor recreation and tourism dollars reaped as a result of the *accessibility to all* of public lands.

Not only would those returns be diminished were the State to take over our public lands, but Idaho would have to bear the costs of management, maintenance, firefighting, and natural disaster response. Idaho, which can't even find funds to fully ensure our children a quality education, does not have the funds it would need for added public lands costs. In fact, Idaho doesn't have the funds this committee is wasting right now on consideration of Idaho's taking over public lands!

It's time to stop this costly 'let's take over public lands' sham. It's time for the ideologues on this committee to recognize that "freedom" belongs to all Americans and public lands are one asset that ensures our freedom. I suggest you step out of your committee chairs and into some hiking boots — the accessibility for *all* to America's public lands guarantees your freedom to roam, your individual right to enjoy America's treasured public lands. Up now! Out of those costly chairs! I'm tired of paying for them. I want my tax dollars invested in *all*-American public lands.