Outdoor Recreation Industry United in support for SOAR,
The Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act

The outdoor recreation experience provider community is united in its support for modernizing the permitting process and authority for facilitated recreation providers operating on public lands. For family businesses, outdoor programs, outdoor education, and motorized and non-motorized outfitters alike, maintaining a permit, growing a business or a program, or applying for a new permitted use has become a dysfunctional process. Agencies, too, acknowledge the need to modernize the permitting process. The SOAR Act (S 1229 and HR 3670) is the result of a years-long effort to meet this national need.

Recent action in the US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, considering in a December 2, 2021 a broad recreation package that includes the SOAR Act and other helpful legislation, is a great step toward final passage of this bill. Smooth passage through the House Natural Resources Committee, too, is great to see. This bi-cameral, bi-partisan support bodes well for the bill’s future, and America Outdoors is encouraging members of congress, who represent our constituents, to advocate for swift movement on the recreation package.

The proposed legislation will:

- Reauthorize outfitter and guide permitting authority for the Forest Service, the BLM, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) so those agencies can keep permit fees;
- Authorize agencies to develop categorical exclusions for permitting processes under certain conditions;
- Authorize, but not require, one permit to be issued when a trip crosses multiple agency boundaries to include NPS Commercial Use Authorizations;
- Eliminate fees based on goods and services delivered and consumed off federal lands;
- Set the standard permit fee at 3% of gross, while maintaining the option for an agency to charge a flat fee;
- Authorize the use of permit fees for permit administration and streamlining processes as well as for related recreation infrastructure and other purposes consistent with FLREA;
- Ensure that the Forest Service use review policy will assign actual use plus 25% not to exceed the original allocation. In addition, if the Forest Service adjusts the assignment of use as part of permit administration, SOAR clarifies that unused capacity may be temporarily assigned for use by current permit holders and other groups;
- Authorize temporary permits for new uses and provide for (but not require) conversion to long term permits when appropriate;
- Authorize allocated capacity to be turned-in for use pools without penalty;
- Require agencies to streamline permitting processes and authorizes programmatic environmental assessments (EAs) to reduce site specific NEPA documentation;
- Reform cost recovery by giving a 50-hour credit for each permit when a group of permits is renewed and provides waivers to the cost recovery requirement.

These provisions create opportunities for agencies and permitted outdoor experience providers to become more effective partners, better directing our focus on our shared interest: connecting more and more people with America’s incredible public landscapes through authentic outdoor experiences.
104 Outdoor Recreation Groups Support SOAR
The Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act
H. R. 3670 & S. 1229

Aerie Backcountry Medicine
Alaska Alpine Adventures Alaska Guide Collective
Alpenglow Expeditions America Outdoors Association
America Walks American Alpine Club American Alpine Institute
American Camp Association American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Hiking Society American Horse Council American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education
American Mountain Guides Association American Sportfishing Association
Angler’s Covey Appalachian Mountain Guides
Archery Trade Association Association for Experiential Education
Association of Marina Industries Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education
Avid4 Adventure Big City Mountaineers Chicks Climbing and Skiing
Choose Outdoors Colorado Mountain School Colorado River Outfitters Association
Colorado Wilderness Corporate and Teams Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides
Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions Dude Ranchers Association
Estes Park Rock Climbing Exum Mountain Guides
Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association Holiday River Expeditions
Idaho Mountain Guides Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Kent Mountain Adventure Center Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce
Los Alamos Mountaineers Mazamas
Middle Fork Outfitters Association Moab Desert Adventures
Montana Alpine Guides Montana Mountaineering Association
Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Montana Wilderness School
Mountain Skills Rock Guides Mountain Trip
Nantahala Outdoor Center National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds
National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs
National Marine Manufacturers Association National Outdoor Leadership School
National Shooting Sports Foundation New Mexico Council of Guides and Outfitters
New Mexico Guides No Barriers USA
North Carolina Outward Bound School Open Lands Consulting LLC
Oregon Outfitters and Guides Association Outdoor Alliance
Outdoors Alliance for Kids Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Outdoor Research
Outward Bound USA Peak Mountain Guides
Red River Adventures REI Rising Tide Associates
RV Dealers Association RV Industry Association
San Juan Mountain Guides San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Santa Fe Climbing Center Sawtooth Mountain Guides
Seneca Rocks Climbing School Sierra Mountain Center
Sierra Mountain Guides Sierra Mountaineering International
Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals Specialty Equipment Market Association Suntoucher Mountain Guides
The Mountaineers The Mountain Guides Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership The Wilderness Society Transforming Youth Outdoors Utah Guides and Outfitters Association Vetta Mountain Guides Washington Trails Association
West Virginia Professional River Outfitters Western River Expeditions Western Spirit Cycling Wilderness Education Association Worldwide Outfitters and Guides Association Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association YMCA of Greater Seattle YMCA of Los Angeles YMCA of the USA