



Where Outfitters *Thrive*

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