



PO Box 20280  
Boulder, CO 80308  
Office: 303.545.9011  
Fax: 303.545.9026  
[www.IMBA.com](http://www.IMBA.com)

The Honorable Tom Tiffany  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
US House of Representatives  
451 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
US House of Representatives  
2400 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse,

On behalf of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), which partners with over 200 local organizations and nearly 200,000 individual supporters, we appreciate the Subcommittee's meaningful work with regards to the importance of outdoor recreation and conservation. IMBA strongly supports the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act. Specifically, Title I, Subtitle B, Section 121, the Biking on Long-Distance Trails (BOLT) Act, which will improve access to quality outdoor recreation trail opportunities on public lands across America. In addition to the BOLT Act, we support the organization of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation; the focus on access to public lands with people with disabilities including trail inventories, accessibility, and assistive technology; the spotlight on veterans and the outdoors; the extension of Every Kid Outdoors Act; and finally the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation specifically leveraging volunteer engagement on public lands; as well as elements from Recreation Not Red Tape.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) creates, enhances, and protects great places to ride mountain bikes. IMBA is focused on creating more trails close to where people live; improving the quality of and equitable access to sustainable, purpose-built mountain bike trails across the U.S.; and supporting trail communities so everyone has access to high-quality, close-to-home rides as well as iconic backcountry experiences. Since 1988, IMBA has been the worldwide leader in mountain bike advocacy and the only organization focused entirely on trails and access for all types of mountain bikers in all parts of the U.S. and abroad. IMBA teaches and encourages low-impact riding, grassroots advocacy, sustainable trail design, innovative land management practices, and cooperation among trail user groups. IMBA Local is a national network of local groups, individual riders, and passionate volunteers working together for the benefit of the mountain bike and multi-use trail communities nationwide.

The Biking on Long-Distance Trails (BOLT) Act is a top legislative priority for our community as it continues the investment in outdoor recreation by recognizing the importance of long distance trails to create iconic backcountry discovery while supporting small rural communities. The legislation will require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to:



PO Box 20280  
Boulder, CO 80308  
Office: 303.545.9011  
Fax: 303.545.9026  
[www.IMBA.com](http://www.IMBA.com)

- Identify no less than 10 existing long-distance bike trails on Federal lands in excess of 80 miles in distance;
- Identify 10 areas where opportunity exists to develop or complete long-distance bike trails on federal lands in excess of 80 miles in distance;
- Coordinate with stakeholders on feasibility of completing long distance trails and the resources necessary for such projects;
- Publish maps, signage, and promotional materials highlighting the positive aspects of the long-distance trail network;
- Issue a report, with input from stakeholders, outlining the details of existing and proposed long-distance trails and their promotion.

There are a number of trails that could benefit from this long-distance trails recognition, such as the Ouachita National Recreation Trail in Arkansas, the High Country Pathway in Michigan, Maah Daah Hey trail in North Dakota, the Great Divide Mountain Bike Trail running from the Canada to Mexico border, and the Bonneville Shoreline Trail in Utah. The report will help highlight and reveal other worthy candidates as well.

Long-distance bike trails have brought incredible economic benefits to rural and urban gateway communities across the country, while also helping communities transition to a more sustainable and reliable recreation economy, and the BOLT Act will help further bolster that economy and health of these communities nationwide.

In addition to the BOLT Act, we believe the following components of the bill are critical to the future of America's outdoor recreation infrastructure.

- **The organization of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR).** This is a critical aspect to the success of access, economic impact, and resources for the outdoors in America as it will bring together all the agencies to coordinate and evolve towards a more efficient system. We look forward to future partnerships with FICOR.
- **Supporting Gateway Communities and Addressing Park Overcrowding.** It is inherently important to work with communities adjacent to our public lands and to find solutions that benefit everyone. The goal is for people to have a fantastic experience on our public lands and these communities are an integral part of that enjoyment.
- **Broadband Connectivity on Federal Recreational Lands and Waters.** As our society becomes increasingly connected, as should our public lands. Critical safety situations, accessibility to camp sites, more simple bookings, lead to a safer, more enjoyable experiences.



PO Box 20280  
Boulder, CO 80308  
Office: 303.545.9011  
Fax: 303.545.9026  
[www.IMBA.com](http://www.IMBA.com)

- **Access for People with Disabilities.** Perhaps one of the most critical components of this legislation is ensuring accessibility to our public lands for all people. IMBA has been working with the land agencies designing and building trails for adaptive riders for years. We are thrilled to see this issue become a priority.
- **Military and Veterans in Parks.** It is critical that the people who have served our country are welcome on our public lands with programs designed to further expand opportunities for recreation.
- **Modernizing Recreation Permitting.** As users continue to look for deeper, more equitable experiences on our public lands, the permitting process can be a barrier to access. We are pleased the committee has addressed this issue to make permitting more streamlined.
- **Maintenance of Public Land.** Volunteerism is the foundation of our public lands system and the International Mountain Bicycling Association, from its inception, has been at the forefront of building and maintaining trails by partnering with federal land management agencies. We are thrilled to see this updated to better leverage volunteer engagement, to streamline the process for volunteers, to promote volunteer opportunities, and finally to allow volunteers to participate without liability insurance.
- **Recreation Not Red Tape.** As supporters of this policy we understand how important these provisions are, including the Good Neighbor Authority allowing Tribes, counties, and states to maintain infrastructure on public land. We would like to see the same type of policy for non-profit organizations as well.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor recreation economy crested over \$1 trillion and accounted for \$563.17 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is an increase of \$238 billion over 2021. Headwater Economics projects that these numbers present a significantly higher value than some of the traditional economic drivers such as motor vehicle manufacturing; oil, gas, and coal; air transportation; and the performing arts.

The recent pandemic makes clear that access to public lands is essential for the health and well-being of all Americans. This legislation is an important step forward in utilizing existing natural recreation resources for a greater purpose and value to the public. The EXPLORE Act is a commonsense, bipartisan way to enable and promote the benefits of physical health, mental health, and wellness through concerted access on public lands.

IMBA appreciates the Committee's role in advancing outdoor recreation across the United States and its important work on the EXPLORE Act. We stand ready to assist the Committee to ensure passage of this



PO Box 20280  
Boulder, CO 80308  
Office: 303.545.9011  
Fax: 303.545.9026  
[www.IMBA.com](http://www.IMBA.com)

important bill into law and find any additional opportunities to increase outdoor recreation to benefit our members and Americans nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK Keller', is written below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Todd Keller, Director of Government Affairs  
International Mountain Bicycling Association