



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

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## **IMBA Advocates for Collaborative Approach to Wilderness Designations on Public Lands**

*Mountain Biking Voices Must be Heard and Heeded*

(Boulder, Colo. December 6, 2017) H.R. 1349, introduced by Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA), would amend the Wilderness Act of 1964 to permit certain wheeled devices, including mountain bikes, in Wilderness areas. IMBA is not supporting this legislation and has submitted its testimony to the House Natural Resources Committee.

The testimony emphasises IMBA's respect for the Wilderness Act, IMBA's collaborative strategy to protect important trails during the development of new conservation designations, IMBA's work to promote alternative mountain bike-friendly land protections and IMBA's strong concerns regarding the U.S. Forest Service's inconsistent management of mountain bike access in recommended wilderness areas.

"IMBA's 30 years of on-the-ground collaboration and leadership have earned mountain bikers access to tens of thousands of miles of trail on public land," said Dave Wiens, IMBA Executive Director. "We've made incredible progress for mountain biking through partnerships, and we're going to continue gaining ground by raising the profile of mountain biking all across America."

IMBA has been involved in discussions about Wilderness and other forms of legislatively driven protections for public lands for decades. When mountain bikers are given a seat at the table in these discussions, important trails can be protected while finding common ground with those who are looking to create [new conservation designations](#). IMBA is actively working with leaders in the conservation community to ensure this collaborative scenario becomes the standard across the country.

Examples like the Continental Divide Wilderness and Recreation Act in Colorado and the Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Act in Montana have been widely celebrated and serve as models for how collaborative efforts involving mountain bikers throughout the process can lead to advancing both conservation and recreation.

"Mountain bikers and the recreation community depend on public lands and thoughtful conservation. Public lands are being threatened at an unprecedented level right now, and it's imperative that public land users come together to protect these cherished places and offer our voices in this critical dialogue," said Wiens. "We know Wilderness hits some mountain bikers' backyards, and we understand why those riders support this legislation. To continue elevating mountain biking nationally, IMBA must remain focused on its long-term strategy for the bigger picture of our sport."

Some public land planning discussions are less inclusive of all user groups and, in those cases, IMBA will actively oppose new Wilderness and other designations that would negatively impact revered mountain biking opportunities. IMBA has recently raised specific concerns about the the U.S. Forest Service's management of recommended wilderness with the Secretary of Agriculture, and continues to work with partners to elevate mountain biking in planning processes nationwide. Mountain bikers are exemplary public land stewards and highly engaged advocates who should have a voice in the future of local trails.

*The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational association established in 1988. Its mission is to create, enhance and protect great places to ride mountain bikes. Learn more at [imba.com](http://imba.com).*