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Date: February 12, 2026

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Outdoor Recreation Coalition Urges Congress to Rein in Use of Congressional Review Act on Public Lands

(NATIONWIDE) – A coalition of leading outdoor recreation organizations delivered a [joint letter](#) to congressional leadership urging swift legislative action to prevent the Congressional Review Act (CRA) from being used to nullify comprehensive land-use plans. The coalition—which includes Access Fund, the American Mountain Guides Association, American Whitewater, America Outdoors, Colorado Mountain Club, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Outdoor Alliance, Public Land Solutions, Runners for Public Lands, The Conservation Alliance, The Mountaineers, and Winter Wildlands Alliance—represents small businesses, guides and outfitters, event organizers, and millions of recreationists across the United States. These public land stakeholders rely on predictable planning under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) to run businesses and steward public lands to make them available for the public.

Under FLPMA, the Bureau of Land Management must develop land-use plans with state, local and tribal governments and the public to guide management of diverse resources. NFMA requires the U.S. Forest Service to craft resource management plans for every national forest based on multiple-use, sustained-yield principles. Developing or revising these plans typically takes years of public input and analysis, the results of which serve to reflect the public consensus on management. The above coalition warns that using the CRA to rescind such plans undermines the taxpayer investments made in this collaborative process and threatens the certainty that businesses and communities depend on.

Congress's recent push to broaden the CRA's scope heightens the urgency of this request and underscores the stakes for recreational access and public-land permittees. Since October 2025, Congress has passed resolutions disapproving five Bureau of Land Management land use plans, setting a precedent for unraveling plans that require years of negotiation and environmental analysis and form the basis for recreation permits and access. All told, land use plans [covering](#) 166+ million acres could be targeted for rescission by Congress.

Further, in January 2026, Representative Pete Stauber introduced a CRA resolution to overturn a public land order protecting the Boundary Waters Canoe Area from mining; the order withdrew the headwaters from mineral development for 20 years, and his resolution would nullify that protection and undermine long-term planning for recreation and permit holders. That same month, the Government Accountability Office concluded that lawmakers could use the CRA to overturn the January 2025 management plan for Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument. The coalition fears these actions foreshadow further attempts to dismantle land-use plans and other decisions carefully crafted for cherished landscapes across the country, jeopardizing established recreational access, permits and long-term business investment.

The coalition letter notes that once a plan is disapproved under the CRA, agencies are barred from issuing a “substantially similar” plan without explicit congressional authorization. Such uncertainty threatens jobs, local investments, and stewardship projects that depend on stable, predictable land-use plans and management consistency. The coalition urges Congress to clarify that land-use plans adopted under FLPMA, NFMA or comparable statutes cannot be rescinded under the CRA and should instead be revised through established administrative processes.

Outdoor recreation advocates are not the only ones raising the alarm. Stakeholders from the [timber](#) and [oil and gas industries](#), as well as several [law professors](#), have warned Congress against continuing down this path because of the widespread disruption and uncertainty it could create for businesses and others.

Quotes from coalition leaders:

- **Erik Murdock, Deputy Director, Access Fund:** “Access Fund and America’s climbing community have invested years of collaboration to shape land-use plans that balance climbing access with conservation, cultural resource protection and local economic needs. When comprehensive plans are rescinded through the CRA, it can create uncertainty for long-standing access decisions—including in places like Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument—and disrupt effective on-the-ground management.”
- **Matt Wade, Executive Director, American Mountain Guides Association:** “Guides and outfitters rely on clear, consistent land management direction to develop trips for the public, hire staff, purchase equipment and plan for the future. If a land-use plan is suddenly rescinded through the CRA, the validity of outfitting and guiding permits and operations may be called into question, affecting both guide businesses and visitor access.”
- **Thomas O’Keefe, American Whitewater:** “Healthy rivers and whitewater recreation depend on durable land-use plans developed with local input and sound stewardship. When the Congressional Review Act is used to overturn these plans, it overrides local decision-making and creates uncertainty for paddlers, river-based businesses and communities that rely on clear, predictable land management.”
- **Aaron Lieberman, Executive Director, America Outdoors Association:** “Outfitters and outdoor recreation businesses across the country depend on long-term land-use plans for stability and certainty. When multiple plans are rescinded through CRA disapproval resolutions, it introduces significant uncertainty for small businesses, employees and the communities that depend on outdoor recreation.”
- **Brian Bergeler, Colorado Mountain Club:** “Colorado Mountain Club members and the guides, small businesses and communities we partner with depend on stable land-use plans to make safe, responsible, long-term decisions on America’s public lands. Congress should act now to ensure the CRA can’t be used to suddenly wipe out FLPMA and NFMA plans—creating chaos for permits, stewardship projects and the outdoor recreation economies that rely on predictability.”
- **Erik Weiseth, Executive Director, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association:** “In Idaho, guides and outfitters are a cornerstone of rural tourism, and they depend on consistent public-land plans to schedule seasons and make investments. The prospect that a plan could be rescinded under the CRA makes it harder for businesses and communities to plan with confidence.”

- **Dave Wiens, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association:** “Mountain bikers work closely with land managers to build sustainable trail systems through careful planning and public collaboration. If plans that establish trail access and management direction can be rescinded under the CRA, it can create uncertainty for trail projects, volunteer investments and long-term maintenance commitments.”
- **Louis Geltman, Outdoor Alliance:** “CRA resolutions are uniquely pernicious in the context of public lands, where it is critical to manage based on the physical and social landscape, not a coarse requirement to come up with something that looks substantially different. Communities that invest in participating in land-use planning decisions deserve to know that their efforts will not be arbitrarily pushed aside. Congress needs to address this dangerous tool and restore the predictability that recreationists, businesses and communities need.”
- **Jason Keith, Public Land Solutions:** “Gateway communities thrive when land-use planning is thoughtful, inclusive and forward-looking. If comprehensive plans can be set aside under the CRA, it can reduce planning certainty for local governments and businesses and complicate long-term efforts to support recreation economies and community resilience.”
- **Kathleen Baker, Executive Director, Runners for Public Lands:** “Trail runners and event organizers rely on clear, stable planning for trail access, race permitting and recreation infrastructure. When planning decisions can be rescinded through the CRA, it can create uncertainty for events, volunteers and the communities that host and benefit from outdoor recreation.”
- **Rebecca Gillis, The Conservation Alliance:** “Outdoor businesses large and small depend on predictable public-land management and durable conservation decisions. When the CRA is used to nullify planning and protection measures—including decisions relevant to places like the Boundary Waters—it can introduce uncertainty that affects business investment, on-the-ground partnerships and local economies.”
- **Betsy Robblee, The Mountaineers:** “For more than a century, The Mountaineers have worked to expand access to the outdoors while protecting wild places. Greater clarity is needed so that long-term plans are updated through established planning processes and provide consistent direction for sustainable recreation and recreational permitting.”
- **Anneka Williams, Winter Wildlands Alliance:** “Winter recreationists depend on clear planning to secure responsible access, protect winter wildlife habitat and support mountain economies. If land-use plans can be rescinded under the CRA, it can create uncertainty for access planning, stewardship work and the communities that depend on winter recreation.”

The coalition stands ready to work with congressional leaders to craft bipartisan legislation that protects the integrity of public-land planning. Protecting comprehensive land-use plans will safeguard the outdoor recreation economy, uphold local collaboration and ensure that public lands continue to be managed for the benefit of all.

For more information, please contact Jason Keith, Public Land Solutions Managing Director, at 303-819-2969.

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