

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
House Committee on Appropriations
2007 Rayburn HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to include a provision to allow hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands. Last Congress, the provision was successfully included in H.R. 5538, The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations, for fiscal year 2017.

Westerners are continuously impacted by closures of public lands by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In Arizona, a perfectly safe outdoor shooting range managed by the Tucson Rod and Gun Club in the Coronado National Forest was closed in 2013. The USFS claims this closure was implemented “to enable contractors and Forest personnel to conduct a risk assessment of the area and remove shooting debris.” On December 6, 2016, the USFS announced that the closure will remain in effect until September 30, 2018, or until rescinded.

In 2013, the BLM banned recreational shooting in the Ironwood Forest National Monument in the name of environmental protection and safety concerns. Local stakeholders protested and submitted comments opposing this closure, but were ultimately overruled.

These federal agencies have repeatedly restricted public access to our federal lands under the guise of safety, resulting in the loss of our sportsmen’s recreational activities. Such restrictions have negative effects on our economy, and our constituents’ rights to hunt, fish, and shoot on federal lands. Enacting this provision will be a good step towards protecting these long-standing American traditions.

The FY 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill contained language which aimed to allow for this provision. Accordingly, we ask that you include language again this fiscal year to protect hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on federal lands:

Sec. ____ . (a) *LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.* —None of the funds made available by this or any other Act for any fiscal year may be used to prohibit the use of or access to Federal land (as such term is defined in section 3 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6502)) for hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting if such use or access—

(1) was not prohibited on such Federal land as of January 1, 2012; and
(2) is conducted in compliance with the resource management plan (as defined in section 101 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 6511)) applicable to such Federal land as of January 1, 2012.

(b) *TEMPORARY CLOSURES ALLOWED.* — Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture—

(1) may temporarily close, for a period not to exceed 30 days, Federal land managed by such Secretary to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting if the Secretary determines that the temporary closure is necessary to accommodate a special event or for public safety reasons; and

(2) may extend such a temporary closure for one additional 90-day period, if the Secretary determines the extension is necessary because of extraordinary weather conditions or for public safety reasons.

(c) *AUTHORITY OF STATES.* —Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the authority, jurisdiction, or responsibility of the several States to manage, control, or regulate fish and resident wildlife under State law or regulations.

We appreciate your continued support towards access to public lands, America's sportsmen, and American traditions.

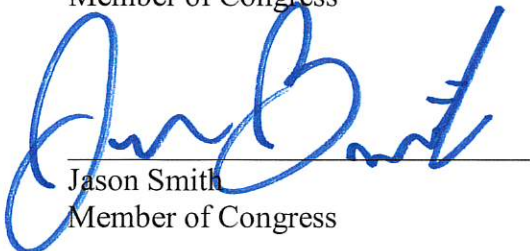
Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



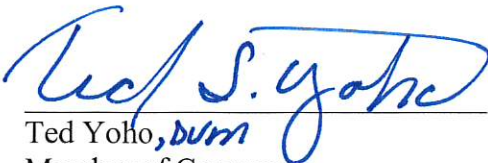
Paul Gosar
Member of Congress



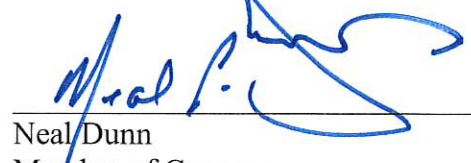
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Member of Congress



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



Ted Yoho, *Dunn*
Member of Congress



Neal Dunn
Member of Congress



Brian Babin
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



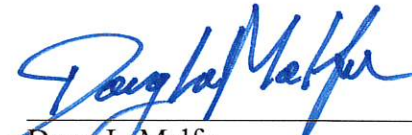
Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



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Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
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