February 14, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
825-A Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Tester:

Thank you for your commitment and leadership on behalf of our nation’s veterans.

As a broad and diverse group of organizations within the outdoor recreation and veterans’ space, we want to express our strong support for the Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act (S. 1263), which was introduced last year by Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Steve Daines (R-MT). This bipartisan legislation is an important step in helping to facilitate the use of our public lands for the treatment of veterans.

America’s veterans deserve the best care possible as they recover from some of the wounds they are increasingly facing after they return home. Connecting veterans with the outdoors can be a helpful form of treatment, but there has yet to be a coordinated effort within the federal government to better facilitate this in a manner that would reach more veterans.

The Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act would create an inter-agency task force co-chaired by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior. The task force would be responsible for identifying barriers to efficiently using public lands for the treatment of veterans under the care of the VA. Additionally, the task force would provide Congress with recommendations on removing those barriers.

There continues to be important work being done within government, research institutions and non-profits to better connect veterans to hiking, mountain climbing, fishing, bicycling and many other outdoor recreation opportunities. We are hoping that S. 1263 would provide more opportunities to help veterans heal through outdoor recreation on public lands.
We respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs pass the Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act and quickly move the bill to the Senate floor. We look forward to working with you on this legislation and your broader work to help our veterans.

Sincerely,

REI
Outdoor Industry Association
Project Sanctuary
Vista Outdoor
Outdoor Research
Lost Arrow Project at Patagonia Works
Salomon Group
Redington
Fly Water Travel
The North Face
Blackhawk!
CCI Ammunition
Bell Sports
Bushnell
Primos Hunting
The Mazamas
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Outdoorful
Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Mountain Shades
HydraPak
Western Spirit Cycling
The Corps Network
Boat.U.S.
No Barriers
Cacapon Institute
CloGear
American Horse Council
Spring Reins of Life, Inc
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Specialty Equipment and Manufacturing Association
The National RV Dealers Association

PeopleForBikes
American Sportfishing Association
Rock Creek Conservancy
River Deep Foundation
Cascade Designs
New Balance Athletics, Inc.
Sage Manufacturing
RIO Products
OLovesM Bags
CamelBak
Federal Ammunition
Speer
Giro
Camp Chef
Conservation Legacy
Tahoe Mountain Sports
North Country Trail Association
Misty Mountain
Cocona, Inc.
Darn Tough Vermont
California Outdoor Recreation Partnership
Veteran's Outdoor Advocacy Group
National Park Hospitality Association
Audubon Naturalist Society
Freedom Alliance
National Forest Recreation Association
Ned & Co.
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds
Association of Marina Industries
Veteran Overland
Alaska Outdoor Alliance