



August 11, 2017

The Hon. Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., Secretary
 U.S. Department of Commerce
 1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for spending time with representatives of the nation's outdoor recreation industry last month. We were delighted to discuss the health of our industry sector with you and to review the opportunities available to benefit the nation even more with government attention to a variety of issues. These issues include: documenting the economic impact of outdoor recreation; managing recreational fisheries; supporting international trade; and encouraging visitation to America's Great Outdoors, including national marine sanctuaries. As we noted during our abbreviated discussion, our \$887 billion per annum industry includes hundreds of thousands of American manufacturing jobs and is vital to the well-being of rural America.

Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation

Our industry is diverse, including activities such as boating, RVing, fishing, hunting, archery, shooting, trail sports of all types, camping and downhill skiing, and more. These activities constitute the largest contributor to the nation's GDP for federally-managed lands and waters. Your department can help build greater appreciation for the role our industry plays through the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA), created by the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016 (REC Act) and now under development by the department. ORSA needs your active support. It must be developed expeditiously and must include all aspects of our industry, and not merely those elements directly connected with recreational activities on federally-managed lands and waters. It must become a regular, annual report and grow to report on regional and state-level assessments. We are delighted to offer our advice and our data to ensure an accurate report that can support the public and private investments in infrastructure that are needed by those enjoying outdoor recreation across the nation.

Recreational Fisheries

We sincerely appreciate the new attention you and the department are providing to the importance of recreational fishing. Management of the nation's fisheries is a priority for us, and we appreciate your understanding that the management techniques appropriate for commercial fisheries are not appropriate for recreational fisheries. Your attention to the contributions of the recreational sector has been appreciated – from decisions on departmental leadership to the composition of advisory councils to actual management, such as the red snapper season expansion decision in the Gulf of Mexico fishery. Eleven million Americans annually fish in saltwater, creating a \$70 billion economic impact on the nation's economy and supporting 454,000 jobs.

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The economic benefits of recreational fisheries are equivalent to those of commercial fishing yet recreational fishing is apportioned only 2% of all fin fish caught each year. We look forward to participating actively in managing and protecting our fisheries and to growing a sustainable recreational fishing industry throughout the nation.

International Trade

Made in the USA is a proud core characteristic of key portions of the outdoor recreation industry, including recreation vehicles and recreational boating. We estimate that 99% of the RVs and 95% of the recreational boats that will be purchased this year in our nation will be produced domestically. And we are also exporting these and other products around the world. The Department of Commerce has assisted our members in the export arena and we ask for continued and expanded support. We rely on a unified North American market for both production and sales. We also need harmonization of standards with our key trading partners, including Canada, Mexico and the European market. This harmonization cannot be achieved unilaterally by the outdoor recreation industry. Finally, counterfeit products, especially from China, are widespread in our industry and are currently impacting US jobs in hardgoods and soft goods across our industry. We were heartened to hear that you are on top of this issue and pledge our support in any capacity to erase this undertow on the growing ecommerce sector.

Visitation to America's Great Outdoors

Finally, the Department of Commerce should be an active player in promoting enjoyment of the Great Outdoors domestically and internationally. Your department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) manages access to saltwater fisheries nationwide and the overall recreational enjoyment of a growing array of national marine sanctuaries. Recreational opportunities connected with these management roles should be promoted, much as the National Park Service is doing through its FindYourPark program. Your department has long had a role in vital tools for our industry – from navigational charts to weather forecasts. We call upon you to continue to evolve these tools into contemporary services that promote safety and enjoyment and enhance resource management by applying new technologies that can safeguard fisheries, coral and other resources – and thus prevent needless closures and barriers to access and enjoyment. We also support increasing our tourism exports. National parks and the Great Outdoors are a proven strategy to deliver benefits from international visitation to the entire nation. We hope you will use the Tourism Policy Council, and your role as its chairman, to expand these efforts, and we pledge our support and involvement.

Thank you for your time and interest at our initial meeting. We suggest continuing to meet twice yearly, addressing topics of mutual interest to your department and the outdoor recreation industry.

Sincerely,

**American Horse Council
American Recreation Coalition
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
ARVC - National Association of RV Parks
& Campgrounds
Boat Owners Association of the United States
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Motorcycle Industry Council**

**National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Park Hospitality Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Outdoor Industry Association
PeopleForBikes
Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association
SnowSports Industries America
Specialty Equipment Market Association
Sports & Fitness Industry Association**