

May 11, 2004

The Honorable Mark Rey
Office of the Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Undersecretary Rey,

As members of America's recreation-based business community, we write to you today to express our concern over recently published reports that the administration plans to revise a popular public land management policy. In particular, the modifications to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule have the potential to negatively impact our nation's natural resources, our citizens' outdoor experience and ultimately, our industry's financial health.

Mr. Secretary, Oregonians are an outdoor-oriented people who spend hundreds of thousands of hours utilizing and enjoying their national forests. Furthermore, enjoyment of these forests is not limited to Oregon's residents. Oregon's most popular tourist destinations, Multnomah Falls and Timberline Lodge, are located in the Mount Hood National Forest and attract millions of visitors each year with their expansive views of wildlands and waterfalls.

Indeed, Oregon's rich natural heritage has given rise to, and nourished many business enterprises whose vision, processes and products have been developed and tested in our national forests. These wild forests have, in fact, been an incubator for important segments of America's outdoor industry, producing over \$18 billion in annual revenues at the manufacturing and wholesale levels.

As manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of hundreds of outdoor recreation products, we depend upon our customers' continued participation in dispersed recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing and mountain climbing, all of which occur in roadless national forests. While we represent different companies who sell to a wide range of markets, from local to global, we are united in our support for the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. We also support legislation to codify the Roadless Rule as proposed in HR 2369 and S 1200.

As you know, the original Roadless Rule provides protections from road-building and future harmful development for 58.5 million acres of national forest lands, including over 1.9 million acres in Oregon. These roadless areas, such as Eagle Creek and Mount Bailey, are popular destinations for our customers and offer both recreation and respite from the rigors of modern life. In spite of Oregon's renowned rainfall, over 2 million of our fellow citizens engage in outdoor recreational activities. In fact, Oregonians rank seventh in the nation in outdoor activity participation. We believe weakening the 2001 Roadless Rule could degrade these important forests, constrain our customers' activities and, in doing so, diminish our business opportunities.

Secretary Rey, the 2001 Roadless Rule is a sensible and balanced attempt to conserve the character and values of roadless forests for future generations of Americans and was arguably the most popular rule in the history of federal rulemaking. To date, over 2.5 million comments have been submitted in support of protecting roadless forests. We ask that you reaffirm the integrity of the rulemaking process and retain the landmark protections of the original Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Doing so will be healthy for our national forests, good for our economy and will leave our children a little of Oregon's natural history.

Sincerely,

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Columbia Sportswear
Entre Prises USA
Metolius
Nike
Norm Thompson

Outward Bound West
Ruffwear Inc
Sahalie by Early Winters
Salomon USA
Solstice Inc



CC Senator Gordon Smith
Senator Ron Wyden
Governor Ted Kulongoski