

Joint Letter from Patagonia and Osprey Packs

May 16, 2019

To our elected officials:

As Outdoor Industry leaders, we at Patagonia and Osprey Packs write to express our strong support for the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act. This important legislation will help protect and restore America's native wildlife and create more resilient landscapes.

Yvon Chouinard founded Patagonia because he and his friends wanted to explore wild places; we are still in business today because we fight for the protection of our public lands and waters and the biodiversity that they support. For over 30 years, we have given 1% of sales to grassroots environmental organizations - over that time, we have invested \$23 million alone into biodiversity and species protection. We believe strongly in preserving critical migration corridors, so wildlife can have freedom to roam. The ability to migrate is key to the survival for much of our country's wildlife, and in turn ourselves.

Wildlife corridors matter to Osprey because the same linking of habitat accomplished through important connective corridors, which benefits wildlife and sustains biodiversity so well, sustains human populations just as well—and the protection and enhancement of our public lands is vital to the future of our industry and all Americans.

Taken all together, outdoor businesses represent a huge range of activities—from fishing to birdwatching, hiking to hunting and camping to conservation. We contribute more than \$877 billion annually to the U.S. economy, generate \$124.5 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue and employ more than 7 million people. Yet, all of our businesses depend on one thing – healthy natural places where people can recreate and wildlife can thrive.

Americans love and value our wildlife and natural heritage. Wildlife watching generates over \$30 billion in consumer spending each year, fishing over \$35 billion and hunting over \$27 billion. These industries support local economies in rural America and generate state and local taxes.

The United States is a world leader in efforts to conserve wildlife through a robust network of public lands and waters including national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests and other conservation areas, yet wildlife populations continue to decline. Scientists estimate that two in ten animal and plant species in the United States are at risk of extinction, largely as a result of habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. Linking habitat through connective corridors is critical for sustaining biodiversity, ecosystem function and robust populations into the future.

The good news is that federal agencies and states are already beginning to work together to protect wildlife corridors. In 2008, the U.S. Forest Service, working with the state of Wyoming, private landowners, sportsmen and conservation organizations, established the nation's first federally designated wildlife corridor to protect a centuries old migration route for pronghorn. Today, the Path of the Pronghorn conserves one of the longest remaining terrestrial mammal migration corridors in North America.

Many of America's most treasured wildlife, including the grizzly bear, bighorn sheep, monarch butterfly, bull trout and dozens of salmon runs are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation. Just as people need roads and highways to travel from one place to another, fish, large mammals, and even plants also need movement corridors, connecting natural communities. Outdoor recreationists likewise seek uninterrupted and undeveloped wild landscapes to traverse and explore. The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act will provide key tools for conserving our nation's wildlife and natural heritage for future generations.

President Theodore Roosevelt said more than 100 years ago, "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets that it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value." This legislation represents an important step in ensuring that future generations will continue to enjoy the beauty, wonder and benefits of America's unique wildlife and natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Hans Cole, Environmental Campaigns and Advocacy Director, Patagonia

Layne Rigney, CEO, Osprey