

Dear NC Member of Congress,

As groups representing more than 100,000 outdoor recreationists in North Carolina, including hunters, anglers, campers, and citizens who enjoy this state's internationally famous natural places, we are writing to ask you to stand up for national public lands in our state and throughout the country.

Our public lands and waters are an American birthright, landscapes where we connect with America's history, hunt and fish with our friends, camp with our families and enjoy the solitude and natural beauty of our country. Public lands are the foundation of the growing outdoor economy, and are a critical underpinning for the travel and tourism industry that keeps North Carolina's economy strong. We ask you to join us in opposing every effort to sell our nation's public lands or transfer them to the states, and work with us to improve how these lands are managed for conservation and recreational benefits.

This is not just a North Carolina issue. North Carolinians travel and value public lands across America. We are quite concerned with efforts by Western states and lawmakers to demand the turn over of federal lands in some Western states. Western public lands are public trust lands owned by all Americans and should remain accessible to all Americans. Access to public lands across America is one of the things that makes America great.

We want you to know just how important these lands are to us, to our way of life, to our communities and economies, and, most importantly, to our children and generations to come.

National forests in North Carolina provide not only wonderful trout fishing experiences and backcountry camping, but support mainstream tourism economies by providing the backdrops of fall color so beloved by all tourists. National Wildlife Refuges and National Seashores such as Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout draw millions of tourists. Some come for wilderness experiences. Others for easy access to inspiring landscapes. All these citizens recognize that public lands are an American tradition, and a tradition that will not give up without a fight.

These places sustain America's hunting and fishing heritage—and serve as powerful economic engines for local communities. Public lands are a foundation of America's \$646 billion outdoor economy, supporting over six million jobs.

Yet right now, some in Congress want to give away the places where we hunt, fish, hike, ride and camp to states or to private owners. North Carolina can do a fine job managing its own lands, but doesn't have the capacity to take on the costs of managing the federal lands within our borders. Most states don't, and end up selling many or most of their citizens' prized public lands. Once lands are taken out of the public trust they are not likely to ever return to public access. When a wealthy luxury resort owner buys a trout stream in North Carolina, few if any North Carolinians will ever again enjoy what this state has protected for ages.

Our nation's lands belong to all Americans. It is vital to the future of hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation, and to the health, wealth and happiness of Americans, to ensure current and future generations have as rich and diverse a network of lands as we do today.

We ask you to stand with thousands of North Carolina's sportsmen and women in opposing the wholesale transfer or sale of America's public lands to state and private interests. We should all work together to improve how these lands are managed, but we cannot deprive current and future generations of Americans of the right to access and utilize the lands and resources that we today enjoy.

Sincerely,

Albemarle Conservation & Wildlife Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Pisgah
Back Country Horsemen of Western NC
Carolina Wetlands Association
Carteret County Wildlife Club
Catawba Valley Wildlife Club
Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves with Nature
Community Alliance for Wildlife
Concord Wildlife Alliance
Friends of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards
Greater Raleigh Outdoors and Wildlife
Habitat and Wildlife Keepers
Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society
Lake Norman Rod & Gun Club
Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists
Lee County Wildlife Club
Lincolnton Sportsman Club
NC Camouflage Coalition
NC Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation
NC Trout Unlimited State Council
North Carolina BASS Nation
North Carolina Falconers Guild
North Carolina National Wild Turkey Federation
North Carolina Quality Deer Management Association
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists
River Hawks
Rocky River Trout Unlimited
Sandhills Rod and Gun Club
Smokey Mountain Sportsmen Association
South Wake Conservationists
Table Rock Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Triangle Fly Fishers
Watery Swamp Hunt Club