



COALITION FOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS

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Letter of Support for RTP Fuel Funding Study - July 29, 2019

Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman
Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member
Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Honorable Ben Cardin
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The nation's recreational trails community strongly supports Section 1514 of America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019, mandating a Nonhighway Recreational Fuel Study. This study is needed to allow Congress to assess the contributions of the Recreational Trails Program to our nation and strategies to continue and expand this contribution. Since its creation by ISTEA in 1991, the Recreational Trails Program has enabled more than 24,000 projects and programs to be completed under federal/state/local/private partnerships leveraging the available funding and contributing to our economy, to the nation's health and safety, and to greater access to our public lands and waters.

We deeply appreciate the Committee's support for trails and its response to the request for inclusion of this provision by a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators.

Adventure Cycling Association
American Council of Snowmobile Associations
American Hiking Society
American Horse Council
American Motorcyclist Association
American Trails
Americans for Responsible Recreational Access
Back Country Horsemen of America
Bikes Belong
BlueRibbon Coalition
The Corps Network
Equine Land Conservation Resource
International Association of Snowmobile Administrators
International Mountain Bicycling Association
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
The League of American Bicyclists
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Association of Recreation Resource Planners
National Association of State Trail Administrators
National Bicycle Greenway
National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
National Recreation and Park Association
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Partnership for the National Trails System
People for Bikes
Professional Trail Builders Association
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
SnowSports Industries America
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association
Student Conservation Association
Tread Lightly!
United Four Wheel Drive Associations

SEC. 1514. NONHIGHWAY RECREATIONAL FUEL STUDY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

- (1) HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.—The term “Highway Trust Fund” means the Highway Trust Fund established by section 9503(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- (2) NONHIGHWAY RECREATIONAL FUEL TAXES.—The term “nonhighway recreational fuel taxes” means taxes under section 4041 and 4081 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to fuel used in vehicles on recreational trails or backcountry terrain (including vehicles registered for highway use when used on recreational trails, trail access roads not eligible for funding under title 23, United States Code, or back country terrain).
- (3) RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM.—The term “recreational trails program” means the recreational trails program under section 206 of title 23, United States Code.

(b) ASSESSMENT; REPORT.—

(1) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once every 5 years thereafter, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall carry out an assessment of the best available estimate of the total amount of nonhighway recreational fuel taxes received by the Secretary of the Treasury and transferred to the Highway Trust Fund for the period covered by the assessment.

(2) REPORT.—After carrying out each assessment under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Finance and Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committees on Ways and Means and Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(A) to assist Congress in determining an appropriate funding level for the recreational trails program— (i) a description of the results of the assessment; and (ii) an evaluation of whether the current recreational trails program funding level reflects the amount of nonhighway recreational fuel taxes collected and transferred to the Highway Trust Fund; and

(B) in the case of the first report submitted under this paragraph, an estimate of the frequency with which the Secretary anticipates carrying out the assessment under paragraph (1), subject to the condition that such an assessment shall be carried out not less frequently than once every 5 years.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out an assessment under subsection (b)(1), the Secretary may consult with, as the Secretary determines to be appropriate—

(1) the heads of—

(A) State agencies designated by Governors pursuant to section 206(c)(1) of title 23, United States Code, to administer the recreational trails program; and

(B) division offices of the Department;

(2) the Secretary of the Treasury;

(3) the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration; and

(4) groups representing recreational activities and interests, including hiking, biking and mountain biking, horseback riding, water trails, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-highway motorcycling, all-terrain vehicles and other offroad motorized vehicle activities, and recreational trail advocates.