

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Cory Gardner
354 Russell Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gardner and Daines:

On behalf of the International Franchise Association (IFA), the world's oldest and largest organization representing franchising worldwide, I write to express our strong support for S. 3422, better known as the *Great American Outdoors Act*. Providing funding for deferred maintenance at the National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, will create an immense economic benefit for the thousands of small businesses and their employees that have been hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, franchising comprised over 733,000 establishments that supported 8.4 million direct jobs and contributed \$787.5 billion of economic output to the U.S. economy. Results from a recent IFA survey revealed that 74% of franchise businesses in the country were closed due to COVID-19. This bipartisan legislation will help improve access to public lands, allowing the many franchise businesses – that are neighboring National Parks – to reopen, and thus playing a vital role in boosting the economy and combatting the historic levels of high unemployment this Country is facing.

In particular, this legislation will benefit hotel and restaurant franchises that rely on the publics' visitation of National Parks to maintain revenue and promote job growth. While these businesses were the first to "empty out" following the closure of National Parks and issuance of local or state stay-at-home orders, this legislation will help them once again contribute to a strong and growing outdoor recreation economy. Likewise, encouraging small business growth means getting Americans back to work and starting the process to healing our great economy.

On behalf of the franchising sector, we thank you for your strong, bipartisan leadership in ensuring our federal lands are protected and preserved for future generations to enjoy. The *Great American Outdoors Act* is a most welcomed development for local communities throughout the nation and the thousands of small franchise businesses and employees who rely on the publics' visitation of federal lands to survive. Thank you, and we stand ready to continue to work with you during these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Matt Haller
Senior Vice President of Government Relations & Public Affairs
International Franchise Association

cc: members of the U.S. Senate