
February 7, 2022

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

Western Governors commend you for including language within the recently introduced Outdoor Recreation Act that would enable state and federal agencies to more effectively combat the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) in western waters, as well as language that supports broadband infrastructure on federal recreation sites.

Western Governors have long been concerned by the threat that ANS pose to western ecosystems and economies. These concerns are articulated in Western Governors' Association (WGA) Policy Resolution [2019-06, Biosecurity and Invasive Species Management](#), as well as the 2019 WGA [Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative Special Report](#). Federal agencies have jurisdiction over several major infested waterbodies in the West, including Lake Mead, Lake Powell and Lake Havasu. The boat inspection and decontamination policies and programs of the agencies managing infested waterbodies are key to regional efforts to contain ANS. These programs are hampered, however, by a lack of clear statutory authority for federal agencies to manage all high-risk vessels upon their departure from infested waterbodies under federal jurisdiction.

Western Governors believe that to adequately protect the West from the migration of aquatic invasive species, federal agencies must be able to act as full partners in invasive species containment efforts and must have the funding and authorities necessary to contain invasive species within lands and waters under their jurisdiction. To this end, federal agencies should be vested with clear authority to manage watercraft upon their departure from infested waterbodies under federal jurisdiction.

We also note with appreciation that the Outdoor Recreation Act addresses the severe lack of broadband investment and infrastructure in many areas in the West. WGA Policy Resolution [2020-08, Broadband Connectivity](#), encourages federal agencies to work with states to pursue strategies to prioritize reviews for broadband infrastructure permits on federal lands. Additionally, in Policy Resolution [2020-07, Rural Development](#), Western Governors strongly support improving and increasing broadband connectivity in the rural West through significant federal investments in mapping, deployment, and adoption.

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Thank you for your efforts to address these critical issues. We look forward to working with you as the Outdoor Recreation Act moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho
Chair, WGA



Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado
Vice Chair, WGA