On Monday, The Mountain Pact, together with 14 chambers of commerce and economic development corporations, sent a letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, and the White House asking them to implement the outdoor economy study authorized by the U.S. Congress as part of the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act (Outdoor REC Act) of 2016, and support the national public lands on which communities depend.

This chamber/EDC letter comes in conjunction with a series of letters from 16 regional and local governments to their respective Congressional representatives thanking them for voting for the Outdoor REC Act and urging their support of public lands on which the outdoor economy relies on.

Passed unanimously by the Senate and with wide support from the House, including by then-Congressman Zinke, the Outdoor REC Act directs the Bureau of Economic Analysis (under the Dept. of Commerce) to conduct an assessment of the nation's outdoor recreation economy and to quantify its impact on the overall U.S. economy.

Until the recent passage of the Outdoor REC Act, the federal government did not measure the outdoor recreation industry as it does the outputs of other economic sectors.
- ignoring a critical contributor to local and rural jobs. Once the federal government fully understands and records the economic benefits of outdoor recreation – just as it does every other major industry contributing to the GDP – proponents of public lands protection, restoration and access will have critical data to inform policy conversations about management of public lands.

This is especially true given the great challenges we face in the work of mitigating environmental degradation from climate change and irresponsible development, and given the ongoing challenge of securing adequate public investment to provide sustainable, high-quality outdoor recreation infrastructure that enables access without compromising the landscape.

For more information, please visit The Mountain Pact website.