



SUSTAINABLE TRAILS COALITION

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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STC STATEMENT ON INTERIOR DEPARTMENT E-BIKES ORDER OF AUG. 29

On August 29, 2019, Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt directed Interior department (DOI) agencies to allow the use of electric bicycles, also known as e-bikes, on all DOI-managed routes that accommodate human-powered bicycling. This includes natural-surface narrow trails.

The Sustainable Trails Coalition (STC) takes no position on federal management of e-bikes and is not seeking e-bike access in Wilderness or managed-as-Wilderness areas. The Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits motor travel in Wilderness. Our sole mission is to restore on-the-ground federal land managers' ability to allow *human-powered travel* in Wilderness areas, including mountain biking, where they think it can work. Mountain biking, unlike e-bike use, is authorized by the Wilderness Act and was prohibited 20 years after the Act passed by federal agency rules that STC seeks to have reconsidered.

The DOI order has drawn complaints that the secretary's order (1) was implemented without a formal public process and (2) does not give local National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) units discretion to disallow e-bikes. STC notes, however, that some of the same objectors (1) oppose a public process to reevaluate human-powered travel in Wilderness and (2) oppose letting any NPS, BLM, or Forest Service Wilderness unit allow human-powered mountain biking.

In terms of human-powered travel, STC believes (1) there should be a public process to reevaluate the outdated one-size-fits-all federal-Wilderness bicycle bans and (2) trails should be managed on the basis of current conditions and on-the-ground expertise. Unlike the attitude reflected in our opponents' top-down approach, STC trusts on-scene Forest Service, BLM, and NPS workers to manage their lands competently.

STC urges those who claim an interest in protecting public lands, including environmental and outdoor recreation interest groups, bicycle manufacturers, nonprofit bicycle trade associations, and bicycle touring groups, to take a consistent, congruent, and coherent stance on trail access issues, always putting the integrity of our public lands and the legitimate pursuits of outdoor recreationists ahead of self-interest, whether financial or unduly exclusionary.

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