

The House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 3rd, 2022

Dear Subcommittee members,

Our planet faces a climate and biodiversity crisis, and the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA) directly confronts these twin threats by strategically protecting over 22 million acres of federal public land in the American West. This bill is the single biggest measure currently before Congress that can push our country closer to protecting 30 percent of the United States from human exploitation by 2030 (the 30x30 initiative).

NREPA is our best chance at preserving the wildlands of the Northern Rockies.

NREPA would designate inventoried roadless areas, wilderness study areas, and select areas within Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Teton National Parks as Wilderness across five ecosystems in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, eastern Oregon, and eastern Washington. Designating these areas as Wilderness ensures their protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Act is the strongest habitat protection that the federal government can confer on public wildlands and their dependent species. Strong habitat protection can mitigate global warming and preserve biodiversity.

NREPA addresses the climate crisis.

Protecting the public's intact meadows, ancient forests, and largely undisturbed wildlands create bigger carbon sinks than allowing for development or taxpayer-subsidized, private for-profit activities such as logging. Wilderness would perpetually protect these areas—chainsaws would not cut short a tree's life-giving carbon sequestration, and forests would maximize the carbon dioxide they absorb. NREPA would protect these areas immediately so our public land might maximally absorb carbon dioxide to mitigate our warming planet.

NREPA addresses the biodiversity crisis.

Resource extraction and development destroys habitat splitting apart connected natural landscapes that species need to survive and reproduce. Habitat destruction drives biodiversity loss. The public lands of NREPA are special places in the lower 48 states where native wildlife still roam. NREPA would preserve that biological integrity by protecting habitat for an array of species, from mammals requiring large landscapes—like the wolverine—to an area's tiny flowers and native bees, which depend upon each other for survival. NREPA would also provide migration corridors for iconic species such as grizzly bears, moose, and elk. NREPA would protect the connected habitat necessary for biodiversity in the Northern Rockies.

We, the undersigned, respectfully petition you to support NREPA and recommend that Congress passes it into law. We must seize this opportunity to fight against global warming and fight for biodiversity, for us and for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,