

Huntsman Pledges Inclusive Effort to Include Outdoor Industry on Roadless Lands

Contributed by The Editors
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SALT LAKE CITY, UT (January 29, 2007) – Utah Governor Jon Huntsman told outdoor industry leaders this morning that he would not submit his current draft petition that would do away with protection of Utah's 4 million acres of roadless national forest lands. Huntsman said the current legal battle over roadless forest lands across the nation has convinced him to take no action in the immediate future which under the current court ruling leaves the roadless protections in place. Additionally, Huntsman pledged to the industry that any future process to develop a roadless petition would be inclusive of all interested constituencies including Outdoor Industry Association.

"We are pleased that Governor Huntsman has made a commitment to our industry not to submit the current petition which would have essentially opened Utah's roadless lands to mining, logging and energy development thereby upsetting a balanced approach to the management of forest lands and diminishing the experience of recreational users and the habitat essential to the hunting and fishing communities," said Frank Hugelmeyer, president of Outdoor Industry Association.

Kim Coupounas, chairperson of OIA and CEO of GoLite said Governor Huntsman called "outdoor recreation the future of the state [of Utah]." "Governor Huntsman acknowledged during our meeting this morning that he understands that the protection of roadless lands is a foundational issue to our member companies," Coupounas said.

Coupounas and Hugelmeyer were joined in the meeting with the governor by Peter Metcalf, CEO of Black Diamond, Mike Wallenfels, president of Mountain Hardwear and Mike Collins, vice president of REI. The group delivered a petition in support of Utah's roadless lands signed by more than 400 members of the outdoor industry.

During the meeting Peter Metcalf told the governor that many companies in the industry are watching and waiting to see what the governor finally decides concerning the future of Utah's roadless lands. "This will be a fundamental issue for many industry companies as they make decisions about whether to relocate to the state of Utah or whether to eventually leave Utah for a place that more closely shares their commitment to preserving our nation's remaining wild places," Metcalf said.

Roadless lands are an essential component of Utah's economy with active outdoor recreation contributing more than \$7 billion to the economy of the state, including generating \$4.5 billion in sales, supporting 82,000 jobs in the state and generating \$348 million in tax revenue, according to Outdoor Industry Foundation's recent report on the active outdoor recreation economy.

The study also found that Utah is dependent on outdoor recreation travel from out-of-state residents. Non-resident travel represents 56% of travel-related expenditures in Utah compared to only 25% for the national average.

OIA has a long history of supporting protections for America's 59 million acres of roadless national forest lands. OIA served as a founding member of the Forest Roads Working Group, which assembled a range of organizations including Wildlife Forever, Wildlife Management Institute, The Wildlife Society, Trout Unlimited, Izaak Walton League of America, International Paper, Pinchot Institute for Conservation and OIA, to advise the U.S. Department of Agriculture on implementing a workable and effective roadless rule.

In addition during past industry efforts, nearly 10,000 participants in outdoor recreation activities sent postcards to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in support of roadless areas.

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About Outdoor Industry Association

Outdoor Industry Association® (OIA) is a national trade association whose mission is to ensure the growth and success of the outdoor industry. OIA provides trade services for over 4000 manufacturers, distributors, supplier, sales representatives and retailers in the outdoor industry. OIA programs include representation in government/legislative affairs, market and social research, member cost saving benefits and outreach initiatives. Educational events include the annual Outdoor Industry Rendezvous, Outdoor University, and the Capitol Summit. Outdoor Industry Association is the exclusive endorser of the Outdoor Retailer tradeshow. For more information go to <http://www.outdoorindustry.org> or call 303.444.3353.