



March 24, 2022

Representative Rick Hansen
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
407 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Support for Establishing Outdoor Recreation Office, HF4356

Dear Chair Hansen, Vice Chair Wazlawik, Ranking Member Heintzeman & Committee Members,

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) – the nation’s leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations comprised of 35 members representing more than 110,000 American businesses – supports the creation of an Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC) in Minnesota. We support this effort to help expand access to the outdoors and to grow a vibrant industry that already generates \$689 billion dollars in output, comprises 1.8% of U.S. GDP, and creates 4.3 million jobs. Prior to the pandemic, this industry was growing faster than the economy as a whole, and we see signs that the pace of growth will continue to gain momentum in the near- and medium-term.

Outdoor recreation is a way of life for many as well as a prominent economic driver in Minnesota, where it generates \$8.4 billion, creates more than 89,000 jobs, and supports healthy, sustainable communities in every corner of the state. Many facets of state government already support and promote Minnesota’s outdoor recreation opportunities and the economic benefits they provide, but an OREC would coordinate these efforts and ensure unity as well as efficiency among outdoor recreation stakeholders and government. The office would also play a prominent role in expanding access to the outdoors and nature-based experiences for Minnesotans.

Outdoor recreation is also an effective economic multiplier. A strong, place-based outdoor culture and access to outdoor assets enables communities and states to attract new business, and to recruit and retain employees; improves urban and rural quality of life; attracts year-round tourism; creates sustainable local economies; and expands access to the outdoors for all residents, creating positive benefits across economic, health, and social indicators. Creating a Minnesota OREC would help focus efforts already underway across multiple agencies and drive Minnesota’s economy forward.

To date, eighteen other states have created ORECs or appointed a Director of Outdoor Recreation to implement strategic plans that grow outdoor recreation through policies, programs, and initiatives. Minnesota’s creation of such an office would build on the state’s storied outdoor legacy and represent a sincere commitment to leverage existing resources to diversify and grow the state’s outdoor economy, expand access to the outdoors, increase rural prosperity, build healthy communities, develop a next-generation workforce, and promote environmental stewardship and responsible resource development.

We kindly ask that you support HF4356 and move Minnesota towards establishing a Minnesota Office of Outdoor Recreation. Throughout this process, ORR stands ready to help grow this essential part of the economy and contribute to the well-being of Minnesotans and visitors alike. Please contact Jill Sims (jsims@nmma.org or 612-961-2220) or Rebecca Gillis (rgillis@outdoorindustry.org or 303-667-4598) should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
BRP
Brunswick Corporation
CD3 Systems (St. Paul, MN)
Faction Marine (Alexandria, MN)

Ferguson-Keller Associates, Inc. (Buffalo, MN)
Hilltop Trailer Sales, Inc. (Fridley, MN)
MarineMax – Bayport, Excelsior & Rogers
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Metro RV Dealers Association (Twin Cities)
Midwest Water Sports - Crystal (Crystal, MN)
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National RV Dealers Association
Nisswa Marine (Nisswa, MN)
Northland Tackle (Bemidji, MN)
Nytech, Inc. (Saint Augusta, MN)
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Writers Association of America
Pleasureland RV Center (St. Cloud, MN)
PointsNorth Search Group (Crosslake, MN)
Powrtran (St. Cloud, MN)
Premier Marine (Wyoming, MN)
Rapala VMC (Minnetonka, MN)
River Valley Marine (Red Wing, Rochester, and Wayzata, MN)
RV Industry Association
Traditions Media (Saint Louis Park, MN)
Winnebago Industries (Eden Prairie, MN)
Wired2Fish (Grand Rapids, MN)

100%

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Saint Paul, MN 55114
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Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to share our support for Rep. Jim Davnie's House File 4356, a bill to create the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Office.

Minnesotans love our great outdoors. From hiking the hills of the Driftless Area to canoeing the Boundary Waters, from swimming our lakes to biking our trails, being outdoors brings us together.

Unfortunately, **not every Minnesotan has equal access to or experience with navigating our world-class parks, forests, and wilderness areas.** The Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Office is designed to address this challenge directly.

The office would bring together key stakeholders from across the state to increase participation and unite participants in outdoor recreation among all Minnesotans, especially historically underrepresented populations.

The bill would advance these goals in a comprehensive and collaborative way, improving the way we market outdoor recreation, creating new economic opportunities for underrepresented Minnesotans, removing logistical and financial barriers to access, and promoting shared conservation strategies that unite the diverse Minnesotans who recreate in our state.

The bill focuses on ensuring that all Minnesotans and our varied geographies, landscapes, and recreation are represented in the program and are at the table in **defining what recreation will be in the coming decades.**

Please support House File 4356.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Chris Conry
Campaign Director
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