



March 27, 2023

The Honorable Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse,

In advance of your Subcommittee's legislative hearing on Tuesday, March 28, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) would like to express our strong support for H.R. 1614, the Range Access Act. This legislation is led in a bipartisan fashion by Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) Member Rep. Blake Moore and CSC Co-Chair Rep. Jimmy Panetta. CSF would like to thank Reps. Moore and Panetta for their commitment to sportsmen and women as well as the Subcommittee for holding this hearing.

The Range Access Act will improve access opportunities for America's 15.9 million paid hunting license holders and nearly 32 million recreational shooters who contribute more than \$55 billion to America's GDP. Last year alone, through manufacturer level excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, hunters and target shooters contributed nearly \$1.2 billion for on-the-ground conservation through the Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act) – the largest source of wildlife conservation funding in the country. Approximately 80% of the funding provided through this Act is directly attributable to target shooters, who collectively spend more than hunters on firearms, ammunition, and equipment.

A recent study of recreational shooting by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, [Assessing the Quality and Availability of Hunting and Shooting Access in the United States](#), clearly indicates the importance of federal public lands for target shooting. The report indicates that 21% of recreational shooters almost exclusively use public land for target shooting. In the report, the top recreational shooting access issues identified are "lack of land on which to shoot, land being too far away, and a lack of information about lands on which to shoot". Given the financial contributions of recreational target shooters to conservation and local economies, it is critical to provide sufficient and accessible shooting ranges across federal lands.

The bipartisan Range Access Act requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to have a minimum of at least one designated shooting range in each BLM and USFS district. Specifically, the legislation requires the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to inventory existing target shooting ranges and identify at least one suitable location for a target shooting range in each BLM and USFS district. Within five years of enactment of H.R. 1614, BLM and USFS would be required to construct a minimum of one free public target shooting range in each of their respective districts.

Additionally, H.R. 1614 will help provide opportunities for adaptive shooting ranges that can increase access for persons identified as disabled. Dispersed shooting across federal lands can often be difficult for the 74 million disabled individuals. The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability, a public health organization that promotes opportunities for persons with disabilities, states “Target Shooting is one of the easiest recreational sports and activities to adapt for people with disabilities. Shooting can be enjoyed by everyone, including individuals with limited hand and arm function and individuals who are visually impaired”. Fortunately, the Range Access Act can facilitate and improve opportunities for disabled persons to enjoy recreational shooting by providing established, structured ranges that are easily accessible.

Furthermore, the Range Access Act provides an opportunity to reduce waste and increase recycling across federal public lands. Recreational shooting ranges are often developed and designed using the Environmental Protection Agency’s Best Management Practices that assist and guide range managers in efforts to mitigate waste from spent bullets and shot. At firearm ranges, berms are designed to absorb and concentrate spent bullets in areas behind the target. This provides an opportunity for the reclamation and recycling of spent bullets through systems that separate vegetation and soils from the spent bullet and shot. Once separated, the spent bullets and shot may be recycled and reused in future ammunition and other metal-based products. By establishing designated ranges, the Range Access Act provides opportunities for federal and state agencies to work with non-governmental partners to reclaim and recycle spent bullets and shot at designated shooting ranges.

Finally, as the Subcommittee is aware, H.R. 1614 is consistent with BLM and USFS multiple use mandates as codified through the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield (MUSY) Act. Both FLPMA and MUSY require the BLM and USFS to support and provide recreational opportunities, to include target shooting. Recreational shooting was further codified as an appropriate use of federal lands through Secs. 4102-4103 of S. 47, the Dingell Act, which stated that “Federal land shall be open to hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting, in accordance with applicable law...”. Furthermore, Sec. 4104 of the Dingell Act provided the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture authority to lease and permit target shooting ranges within certain federal lands that includes the BLM and USFS. The Range Access Act will help fulfil Sec. 4104 of the Dingell Act.

In summary, the Range Access Act is an important step to enhance public access for America’s sportsmen and women and to reduce waste on federal public lands. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation thanks Reps. Moore and Panetta for leading the Range Access Act and the Subcommittee for holding a hearing on this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Crane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Crane
President and CEO