

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1422

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. PORTER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NEGUSE, and Mr. RUIZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

Whereas September 3, 2024, marks the 60th anniversary of the date of the enactment of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), which gave to the people of the United States the National Wilderness Preservation System, an enduring resource of natural heritage;

Whereas the Wilderness Act instituted a national policy to recognize the natural heritage of the United States as a valuable resource and to preserve wilderness for the use and enjoyment of future generations;

Whereas, in the 60 years since the enactment of the Wilderness Act, Presidents and congressional leaders from both parties, working with land management experts within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture and wilder-

ness advocates, have expanded and improved the National Wilderness Preservation System;

Whereas the Wilderness Act has been used by Congress to protect nearly 112,000,000 acres of public lands as designated wilderness in 44 States;

Whereas wilderness provides billions of dollars of economic activity and ecosystem services in the form of safe drinking water, clean air, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities;

Whereas wilderness protects cultural landscapes, provides a place of refuge for wild nature, and preserves important parts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community values;

Whereas the next 60 years of the Wilderness Act presents an opportunity for the Federal Government to right the wrongs of the past and meaningfully include Tribal governments in the designation and management of wilderness areas;

Whereas wilderness provides for and protects natural soundscapes and dark skies, which are increasingly rare resources in our developed world;

Whereas wilderness serves as a natural laboratory for scientific research, providing a benchmark for assessing the health of our natural world while deepening our understanding of ecological processes and the impacts of human activities on the environment;

Whereas wilderness offers solitude, solace, and opportunities for personal reflection and growth;

Whereas wilderness is an egalitarian means of access to wild places, connecting people to the natural world, promoting

physical and mental well-being, and fostering a sense of wonder and responsibility for the environment;

Whereas global climate change, biodiversity loss, degradation of wildlands, and nature deprivation are the existential, interconnected crises of our times;

Whereas wilderness helps mitigate the effects of climate change by providing critical refugia for flora and fauna, reducing surface disturbances that exacerbate the effects of climate change, eliminating greenhouse gas emissions related to fossil fuel extraction, and contributing to the goal of protecting 30 percent of global lands and waters by 2030; and

Whereas wilderness remains the most effective and durable conservation tool of the United States, preserving wild nature for the benefit of humanity and other species and providing a clear legal framework for safeguarding delicate ecosystems from degradation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the 60th anniversary of the Wil-
3 derness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.);

4 (2) recognizes and commends the extraordinary
5 work of the individuals and organizations involved in
6 advocating for and maintaining the National Wilder-
7 ness Preservation System;

8 (3) acknowledges the value of Traditional Indig-
9 enous Knowledge and recognizes the importance of
10 including Indian Tribes in the designation and man-
11 agement of wilderness areas; and

1 (4) celebrates wilderness, a uniquely American
2 idea and asset preserved as a gift to future genera-
3 tions, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, sex-
4 ual orientation, gender identity, economic status, po-
5 litical belief, or other diverse characteristics.

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