

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS
Co-CHAIR

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

WEBSITE: <http://grijalva.house.gov/>

1511 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone (202) 225-2435 | Fax (202) 225-1541

101 W. Irvington Rd., BLDG. 4
Tucson, AZ 85714
Phone (520) 622-6788 | Fax (520) 622-0198

146 N. State Ave.
P.O. Box 4105
Somerton, AZ 85350
Phone (928) 343-7933 | Fax (928) 343-7949

1412 N. Central Ave., Suite B
Avondale, AZ 85323
Phone (623) 536-3388 | Fax (623) 535-7479

FACEBOOK: [Facebook.com/Rep.Grijalva](https://www.facebook.com/Rep.Grijalva)
TWITTER: [Twitter.com/RepRaulGrijalva](https://twitter.com/RepRaulGrijalva)
INSTAGRAM: [Instagram.com/RepRaulGrijalva](https://www.instagram.com/RepRaulGrijalva)

April 6, 2018

James Caswell
PO Box 273362
Fort Collins, CO 80527-3362

Dear James:

Thank you for writing me with your concerns about H.R. 1349. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

H.R. 1349 is a short bill with a huge impact that cuts right at the heart of the Wilderness Act, one of our most unique and successful conservation laws. This bill authorizes the use of bicycles and other forms of mechanical transport in wilderness areas – an amendment to the statute that is far from a simple technical fix.

For over 50 years, the Wilderness Act has helped protect our most pristine wild places, something that is increasingly important as open space and intact natural areas continue to disappear across the country. But the promise of wilderness goes beyond conservation and land protection – wilderness provides opportunities for “quiet recreation” in areas “untrammelled by man.” Bikes are not – and never have been – part of the wilderness experience.

Unfortunately, proponents of this bill are intent on spreading misinformation designed to undermine the congressional intent and history of the Wilderness Act. It is true that the Forest Service made a mistake and allowed bikes for a short period of time, but that error was corrected decades ago and the legislative history clearly supports the prohibition of bikes.

Congress debated the Wilderness Act for eight years before it finally became law in 1964. In the Act’s legislative history, there is no mention of exempting bicycles from the law’s prohibition on mechanical transportation. In fact, the statute is quite clear that “no form of mechanical transport” is allowed in designated wilderness areas.

The one clear exemption from this prohibition is for wheelchairs, which Congress expressly authorized to access wilderness areas when it passed the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Federal land management agency protocols and guidelines for managing wilderness areas do not place restrictions on the legitimate use of wheelchairs. In fact, the definition of mechanical transportation in the Forest Service manual for *Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resource Management* clearly states that it does not

include "wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances".¹ Wheelchair access in wilderness is non-issue and its inclusion in H.R. 1349 is a red herring meant to distract from the true purpose of the bill.

My opposition to this bill is not about blocking access to wilderness or any other public lands. Everyone has a right to experience wilderness. However, this bill is meant to undermine the history and legacy of the Wilderness Act merely to prove a political point. There are plenty of opportunities for biking on federal lands and we should be looking at positive ways to enhance that access, not rip apart the National Wilderness Preservation System.

H.R. 1349 threatens the mission of the Wilderness and I we will fight to ensure it is rejected by Congress.

I would like to thank you again for contacting me. Please know that my staff and I will be monitoring this issue closely to take the necessary steps to make sure your voice is heard on this issue in Congress. Democracy works best when we stay in touch, so I hope you will continue to contact me about the issues that matter most to you. Please visit <http://grijalva.house.gov>, where you can sign-up for e-mail updates, send a message to me about current events or pending legislation, access my statements and press releases, request copies of legislation and government reports, and receive detailed information about the many services that I am privileged to provide for my constituents. I am honored to serve you, so please never hesitate to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

¹ US Forest Service. Forest Service Manual 2300 – Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resource Management: Amendment No: 2300-2007-1 . Approved by Frederick Norbury, Associate Deputy Chief, NFS, Washington DC: US Forest Service, December 26, 2006.