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Republicans for Environmental Protection ★★★ www.rep.org

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Dear Congressman:

Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP), a national grassroots conservation organization, respectfully asks you to support H.R. 146, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. This broadly supported legislation is a significant conservation opportunity that represents years of hard work and dedication. It includes many worthwhile measures, such as granting permanence to the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS).

REP plans to score a vote on this legislation in its 2009 Congressional Scorecard.

This bipartisan package of bills would protect nearly two million acres of Wilderness and a thousand miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, including special places in California's White Mountains and Sierra Nevada, Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, Idaho's Owyhee Canyonlands, Oregon's Mount Hood, the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest. It will also protect 1.2 million acres of the Wyoming Range.

These provisions, along with many others, are the result of stakeholder collaboration and enjoy strong local support. While some raised process arguments when this legislation was considered as S. 22, we believe that the omnibus approach represents the most logical way to move these measures through the legislative process. Other approaches would be very time consuming at a time when Congress has a lot on its plate.

The NLCS provision, which was passed in the House in 2008, would codify this system of America's best multiple-use lands and help ensure sound management of these BLM managed resources. Codification will also ensure that the recreational value of NLCS lands to hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts will be effectively marketed to the economic benefit of adjacent Western communities.

Elevating the prominence of the NLCS will show that effective conservation can co-exist with a variety of land uses. It will ensure recognition of the outstanding historic and recreational values of NLCS lands and the rugged individualism that they promote.

It is worth pointing out that CBO estimates enacting the omnibus lands package will have no effect on revenues and no net effect on direct spending, and that H.R. 146 contains language protecting hunting rights that the National Rifle Association has signed off on.

As a Republican organization, we want GOP legislators to share the credit for passing this worthwhile and popular package of conservation bills. H.R. 146 passed the Senate overwhelmingly with the support of a majority of Republicans.

Thank you for considering our views as you vote on this important measure.

Sincerely,

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