

**Coalition to Protect America's National Parks * Earthjustice
EPIC - Environmental Protection Information Center * Future-West
Gallatin Wildlife Association * Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Klamath Forest Alliance * National Parks Conservation Association * Sierra Club
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates**

October 8, 2015

Re: Please Oppose H.R. 974/Yellowstone and Grand Teton Paddling Act and Rep. Lummis' Proposed Amendment

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to keep Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks' rivers and streams protected and **oppose Rep. Lummis' proposed amendment to H.R. 974 and the underlying bill**. This legislation threatens to undo existing protections in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

The bill, as written, would lift existing protections and regulations on hand-propelled vessels in most of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. The National Park Service would be required to study the use of hand-propelled vessels for up to 6,500 miles of backcountry streams and rivers and develop new regulations within three years. This is a vast area within both parks which would need careful, science-based evaluation. The bill prescribes a new extensive study while providing no funding source. Last year, the Congressional Budget Office estimated the cost of a similar bill in the millions. The National Park Service is already strapped for funding and cannot afford to divert funds from current programs.

Rep. Lummis' proposed amendment would *require* the National Park Service to allow hand-propelled vessel use on over 450 miles of the most pristine rivers of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks flouting any public input or review of impacts to other visitors, wildlife, or Yellowstone's iconic geothermal features. The amendment does not narrow the original study area nor address the additional funding needed for the study.

The continued success of the national park idea depends upon world-class stewardship of park resources and wildlife with public access. The existing regulations in Yellowstone and Grand Teton that allow paddling on certain waterways provide that balance.

This bill and the proposed amendment are no way to manage two of our most iconic national parks. On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to oppose Rep. Lummis' proposed amendment to H.R. 974 and the underlying bill.

Sincerely,

Maureen Finnerty
Chair, Executive Council
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Rebecca Judd
Senior Legislative Counsel
Earthjustice

Natalynne DeLapp
Executive Director
EPIC - Environmental Protection Information Center

Dennis Glick
Executive Director
Future-West

Glenn Hockett
Volunteer President
Gallatin Wildlife Association

Caroline Byrd
Executive Director
Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Kimberly Baker
Executive Director
Klamath Forest Alliance

Kristen Brengel
Senior Director, Legislation and Policy
National Parks Conservation Association

Athan Manuel
Director, Lands Protection Program
Sierra Club

Roger Hayden
Managing Director
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates