

Major Bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Package Passes Key Hurdle in Congress

Last week, the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee passed by unanimous consent the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act. The EXPLORE Act includes key provisions for recreational boating and is the first-ever outdoor recreation specific package of bills.

Outdoor recreation continues to be one of the few sectors that has broad bipartisan support and momentum in Congress. The bipartisan legislation will provide greater access to public lands and waters, while also modernizing policies and procedures to support recreation businesses that connect people to outdoor experiences. The EXPLORE Act is a companion to a similar package passed in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee last year, America's Outdoor Recreation Act (AORA).

NMMA and its partners played a key role in developing provisions to improve and expand the management of aquatic invasive species (AIS) – a top priority for the recreational boating industry. AIS costs the economy billions of dollars every year and can prevent access to waterways while harming ecosystems for native species. The bill takes steps to improve inspections and decontaminations of boats entering federal waters while ensuring boating access is not hampered or disrupted.

"Thank you to Chair Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Ranking Member Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) for spearheading the EXPLORE Act, which will help safeguard our natural resources and ensure our bodies of water are properly preserved and protected," said Frank Hugelmeyer, President and CEO of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). "This legislation not only increases outdoor recreation access for millions of Americans but also mandates vital enhancements to detect and manage aquatic invasive species. On behalf of the recreational boating industry, NMMA is proud to support this important legislation that helps keep our lakes and inland waterways healthy and strengthens boaters' access to these natural resources."

NMMA will continue monitoring the progress of this bill and advocating for priorities that assist marine manufacturers. For more information, please contact NMMA director of federal government relations, Clay Crabtree at ccrabtree@nmma.org.