

Partnership for the National Trails System

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MEMO TO: Leadership Council and Trail Organization Leaders

FROM: Gary Werner

RE: CONTACT REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT S. 22 --
OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS BILL -- TODAY -- HOUSE VOTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH!

Greetings:

I learned today that the House of Representatives is planning to vote on **S. 22 - the Omnibus Public Lands Bill - next Wednesday, February 11th. THIS VOTE WILL BE EXTREMELY CLOSE!** It is essential that the House pass the bill as they received it from the Senate.

- If the House makes **any** amendments to the Omnibus Public Lands Act—including under a motion to recommit—the bill must return to the Senate, where it will be stalled indefinitely by a filibuster.
- The bill was stalled in the Senate for nearly a year due to a threatened filibuster. If the House approves the Senate-passed version unchanged, it will go directly to President Obama for his signature. If the bill is modified in any way through an amendment or motion to recommit, the bill must return to the Senate, where it will again be subject to a filibuster. A single amendment effectively kills the bill for this year.

The **Omnibus Public Lands bill -- S. 22** is the BIG (160 bills in all) trails bill of the new 111th Congress! The bill includes these components important to the National Trails System:

- Authorization of the National Landscape Conservation System in the Bureau of Land Management;
- Authorization of Willing Seller Land Acquisition Authority for nine national scenic and historic trails;
- Authorization of Revision of the Feasibility Study for 4 Historic Trails;

- Designation of the Arizona National Scenic Trail;
- Designation of the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail;
- Designation of the New England National Scenic Trail;
- Designation of additional routes and feeder trails for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail;

- Designation of the Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail;
- Authorization of a Feasibility Study of the Chisolm Trail;
- Authorization of a Feasibility Study of the Great Western Trail (cattle trail);

PLEASE ACT -- CALL OR E-MAIL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH -- ASKING THEM TO VOTE TO PASS S. 22 - THE OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS BILL -- WITHOUT ANY AMENDMENTS. THIS IS A CRITICAL BILL FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM!

MESSAGE IS: VOTE **YES** ON **S. 22**

VOTE **NO** ON **ANY AMENDMENT** TO S. 22

For e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of your Representatives in Washington, D.C. go to www.house.gov on the internet.

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS ALERT TO OTHER ACTIVISTS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION.

Thanks for your help!

To clarify an error in the article below, the vote is not expected to go under suspension of rules.

The vote on the bill will occur and then we will face a vote on a motion to recommit. Just as we did last spring when the Conservation System Act went through the House as a stand alone bill.

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Our Mission: To protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places

PUBLIC LANDS: House to move on Senate omnibus package next week
(02/06/2009)

Eric Bontrager, E&E reporter

The House will vote next week on a package of more than 160 public lands, water and natural resources bills that, if made law, would constitute one of the most sweeping conservation measures in years.

A spokeswoman for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) confirmed yesterday that Democrats plan to bring the 1,294-page bill directly to the floor next week in a bid to quickly move the legislation to the president's desk.

S. 22 is expected to be considered under suspension of rules, meaning no member can attach amendments to the package and a two-thirds majority is required if a vote is requested, House Natural Resources Chairman Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said last month.

The package, cleared by the Senate last month, would designate nearly 2 million acres of public lands as wilderness in California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Virginia and West Virginia.

The bill also contains dozens of proposals authorizing new studies for national park units, heritage areas and wild and scenic rivers. It would codify the 26-million-acre National Landscape Conservation System and allow construction of a road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

Senate Democrats spent nearly a year crafting the package, which combines bills from both Democrats and Republicans, but those efforts were stalled by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.). Coburn used procedural tactics to delay the package, proposing amendments and attempting to filibuster the bill, charging it would increase government spending and curtail energy development.

Rahall last month said the decision to bring the bill under suspension is not intended to stymie opposition to the bill but Democrats simply believe the proposals to be noncontroversial.

Mike Matz, president of the Campaign for America's Wilderness, told E&ETV's OnPoint yesterday that Democrats could still bring it up under an open rule and offer amendments to tweak or add to the bill. He warned that doing so could bring more problems for the package. "If you get into that, then we have to go back to the Senate side and we have the Coburn conundrum again," he said.