



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 -- THIS WEEK IN D.C. -- NEXT WEEK AT HOME -- HOUSE VOTE DELAYED UNTIL WEEK OF FEBRUARY 23RD!

Greetings:

The House of Representatives did not vote on **S. 22 - the Omnibus Public Lands Bill** - yesterday as scheduled due to work on the Economic Recovery Act (see the article below for details). Congress will be at home in their states next week for the annual President's Day Recess. The **next opportunity** for the House to vote on **S. 22** will be when they return to Washington, D.C. **the week of February 23rd.**

NEXT week when your member of Congress is back in his/her district is a great time to check their schedule (often online or through a call to the district office) and stop by at an event or the office to show support for the Omnibus Public Lands bill and encourage support for the bill and opposition to any motion to recommit it.

Letters to the editor during the time they are in the district are also very helpful.

THE 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 -- CONTINUE TO CALL OR E-MAIL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS OR MEET WITH THEM AT HOME NEXT WEEK -- 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!

Hi everyone.

The latest from the Hill is this: The House did not vote on the Omnibus yesterday. As the attached article points out, the next likely chance for the Omnibus to be taken up by the House is the week of Feb. 23.

This is a delay that is unfortunate, but there has been some tremendous outreach to Congress on this bill and we still expect a vote soon. We do however still need you and your members to contact your member of Congress and 1) ask them to support the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 AND 2) oppose any motion to recommit.

There are still many rumors flying around on what a motion to recommit might say (likely something to do with guns), but our message is clear and simple as stated above. Support the bill and oppose any motion to recommit.

Please contact me if you have any questions and THANK YOU to everyone who have been taking this rollercoaster ride since last year on this bill. We WILL get it done...we just have to stay on the coaster a little bit longer!

Keep up the great work!

Kevin

Kevin Mack

National Landscape Conservation System

Campaign Director

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

PUBLIC LANDS: House to hold on omnibus package until after break

(02/12/2009)

Eric Bontrager, E&E reporter

The House will not take up a the public lands, water and resources omnibus bill until after the Presidents Day recess next week, sources on and off the Hill said.

Debate was set to begin yesterday on **S. 22**, a package of 160 public lands, water and resources bills.

It was delayed while the House and Senate worked to reconcile their two economic stimulus bills, but two sources familiar with the package say the bill will be held until

after Congress returns from the Presidents Day break. Congress is scheduled to return the week of Feb. 23, with President Obama scheduled to speak before a joint session on the evening of Feb. 24.

The 1,294-page bill would designate more than 2 million acres of wilderness in nine states and establish three new national park units, a new national monument, three new national conservation areas, more than 1,000 miles of national wild and scenic rivers, and four new national trails.

It would codify the 26-million-acre National Landscape Conservation System and allow construction of a road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. The bill also would make the birthplace of President Bill Clinton in Hope, Ark., a National Historic Site, and establish several programs related to climate change adaptation and water resources (*E&E Daily*, Jan. 14).

The Senate passed the measure, 74-21, after nearly a year of trying to beat Sen. Tom Coburn's (R-Okla.) procedural roadblocks against bills included in the omnibus that he claimed would increase government spending and limit potential oil and gas development on public lands.

While expected to come to the floor under a rule, House Natural Resources Chairman Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said earlier this week that Democrats are not planning to push for any amendments because any changes would require sending it back to the Senate before it could go to the White House.

"We can't change the bill, the circumstances won't allow it," Rahall said. "Reality is reality, and the reality is if we send it back to the Senate we'll run into the same problems as before."

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the ranking member on the National Parks Subcommittee, said he and other Republicans may offer procedural amendments that could block passage of the bill, noting that more than 70 of the bills in the package are Senate-only proposals that should have hearings before passage of the House rather than going directly to the floor (*E&E Daily*, Feb. 11).