

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE**

**BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
REGARDING**

**H.R. 5171 (Tipton) "Ski Area Fee Retention Act"
July 17, 2018**

Thank you for the opportunity for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, to provide views on H.R. 5171 Ski Area Fee Retention Act.

H.R. 5171 proposes to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to provide for the establishment of a Ski Area Fee Retention Account.

USDA supports the concept of H.R. 5171 as it would improve ski area permit administration and customer service, increase efficiencies in processing of ski area improvement and related infrastructure proposals, and to enhance avalanche-related safety education. We do, however, have concerns over the scoring of the proposed legislation.

In 2016, \$45 million in ski area fees were collected and submitted to the United States Treasury. The current five year average for ski area permit fees collected is \$37 million. Based on the formula in the bill, we expect approximately \$22-24 million would be retained each year. Retained fees would be used at mountain sites to improve recreation opportunities, that to contribute to local economic activity across 122 ski resort communities operating on National Forest System lands in 14 States. Moreover, the ski area permit fees retained under the bill would be in addition to cost recovery fees collected and retained under separate authorities and would be supplemental to appropriated funds.

We appreciate the efforts of the committees to sponsor this important legislation and would like to work with them to improve the management of our ski areas.