



# American Horse Council Washington Update

## **1000 Horsemen and Women Push “Great American Outdoors Act” Toward the Finish Line!**

Washington DC; July 22, 2020. In a rare, bipartisan development, on Wednesday, July 22, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the “Great American Outdoors (GAO) Act of 2020” (H.R. 1957) by a vote of 310 to 107. The “GAO Act,” referred to as a “recreation package,” combines key elements of legislation long supported by the horse industry. This includes more resources for the backlog maintenance of public trails and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), at \$900 million per year, which supports conservation easements that promote riding. The bill also incorporates provisions of the industry supported “Restore Our Parks Act” (ROPA). It creates a revenue stream to dedicate funds from energy development projects to support the maintenance of trails run by the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and other agencies. “Whether it’s been a campaign to pass “ROPA” or the “Recreation Not Red Tape (RNR) Act,” for the past three years, the horse industry has worked steadily to pass legislation that will make the nation’s public trails more accessible to horsemen and women,” noted American Horse Council (AHC) President Julie Broadway.

The House action follows on the heels of a similar, bipartisan victory in the Senate, which passed the bill on June 17 by a vote of 73 to 25. During meetings in February, staff with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee informed representatives from the horse industry that they intended to move a recreation package that bundled the sector’s top trails issue priorities. They also accurately predicted that Congress would pass trails legislation before the November election. “More than 1000 members of the horse industry have sent letters to Congress urging support for the recreation package,” stated Craig Huffhines, President of the American Quarter Horse Association and Chairman of AHC’s Recreation, Trails and Land-Use Committee. “Wednesday’s victory shows what the horse industry can achieve when we work together,” continued Huffhines.

Details: Bryan Brendle at [bbrendle@horsecouncil.org](mailto:bbrendle@horsecouncil.org).