



TO: All Appalachian Trail Clubs and Communities
FROM: Lynn Davis, ATC Director of Federal Policy & Legislation
DATE: 11 January 2018

SUBJ: UPDATE on how clubs and communities can oppose H.R. 1349 –
Legislation to Amend the Wilderness Act

Dear Trail Clubs, A.T. Communities and Members,

A month ago, you were provided with an overview on a piece of fast-moving federal legislation – H.R. 1349 which attempts to amend the Wilderness Act to allow mountain bikes and other forms of mechanized transport in wilderness areas. Clubs and members have responded by contacting congressional offices and by adding their clubs to a list of more than 100 conservation organizations who oppose this legislation. Thank you.

While it is difficult to predict when this legislation will move to a vote on the House floor, it is important that Congressional members continue to hear why this legislation is of grave concern. ATC has updated our position statement (see attached) and is currently moving into a step-by-step campaign to oppose this legislation that will proceed like this:

1. ATC is encouraging clubs, communities, members to personally connect with House offices in January to make certain that our opposition to H.R. 1349 is noted. Contact can be by phone or email, or both. Letters and emails can and should be simple:
 - Make certain you establish you are a constituent.
 - Provide brief background on your stake in this issue. Examples: *I am a trail maintainer and know the challenges of Trail upkeep*, *I am hiker and cannot imagine navigating the narrow Trail with bikes ...*
 - Provide 1-2 message points on why the legislation is problematic. Reference ATC's position statement. Main message points are that:
 - the proposed legislation breaches the intent of the Wilderness Act and could potentially affect 150 miles of the Trail which passes through 25 wilderness areas,
 - the proposed legislation sets up all sorts of questions and likely court challenges on whether the legislation supersedes the National Trails System Act which designated the A.T. as a footpath solely,
 - the proposed legislation creates Trail management issues and sets up visitor safety problems, and
 - the proposed legislation ignites conflict between user groups when collaborative planning is effective in defining recreational access. Note, the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) supports collaborative planning, not this bill.

2. Be prepared to circle back to House offices when the bill is scheduled for a vote. ATC will immediately notify clubs, communities and members to again let House members know of the impending vote and that a second round of calls and emails is critically needed.
3. Be prepared – if H.R. 1349 passes – to begin contacting Senate members.

What is the likelihood of this bill passing in the House? Honestly, it's difficult to say. **Constituent contact with House members could have significant impact on whether this bill gets voted down in the House. So, thank you for your efforts.**

Please note that there will be a re-freshened sign-on letter for organizations and communities to add their names. The Wilderness Society is leading this effort. As soon as we have the letter, clubs and communities you will be sent the link.

Thank you all for your assistance. I can be reached at (202) 897-8074. I welcome your engagement, your reports on outreach, and your thoughts. Thank you for whatever you choose to do.