



SIERRA CLUB

MONTANA CHAPTER

Letter to the Editor

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Yesterday, the house passed Trump's budget reconciliation bill. While the bill still contains many provisions of grave concern, we can't let this opportunity pass without recognizing the efforts of Representative Ryan Zinke in protecting public lands. Under Zinke's leadership, a contingent of House republicans held out to prevent a provision allowing the sale of public lands in Utah and Nevada, thereby increasing the likelihood of similar sell offs in the future in Montana and other states.

Zinke, and the bipartisan Public Lands Caucus, were also able to stave off provisions which would have allowed: the building of the Ambler mining road in Alaska; the rollback of key federal land use plans in Montana; and for the destruction of fragile ecosystems in the western Arctic.

Rep. Zinke's willingness to stand up against the land selloff provision in the reconciliation bill was a testament to the commitment of Montanans' to protect the landscapes that comprise the fabric of our daily lives. Our voices were heard! It is also a heartening sign that bipartisanship can reemerge in this dark time to protect the lands, waters, air and wildlife that we all value.

While threats to the Arctic, Boundary Waters and other key natural resources remain, we hope that Rep. Zinke will continue to work to protect public lands as the bill heads over to the Senate. Over 50 years ago, under a Republican president, the key environmental laws that now govern this country were enacted. Republicans again need to take the reins to ensure that our national treasures are protected for present and future generations.

We thank Rep. Zinke for showing leadership on this issue.