

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned members and partners of the [Outdoors Alliance for Kids \(OAK\)](#), write to collectively express our concern over the funding cuts and mass layoffs at AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is a critical program that connects our country's youth to the outdoors through the creation of jobs in conservation, disaster relief, and the outdoor economy, and the recent attacks on AmeriCorps directly threaten the wellbeing of our future generations and our communities.

OAK is a leading national alliance of more than 100 businesses and non-profit organizations representing more than 60 million individuals across the U.S., with a common interest in connecting children, youth and families with the outdoors. One-hundred million people in the U.S. - including 28 million children - do not live within walking, biking, or rolling distance of a safe park or green space. Our members and supporters believe that the need for opportunities to recreate, learn and work in the outdoors has never been more apparent. Providing these opportunities will promote health and wellness and drive a sustainable outdoor recreation economy.

Each year, AmeriCorps creates opportunities for 75,000 young people nationwide to serve¹, and these various programs benefit many individuals, communities, and fields of service. AmeriCorps participants protect public lands through conservation projects, including trail maintenance, forest resilience, and protecting species and habitats to sustain wildlife.

Furthermore, AmeriCorps projects and programs increase reforestation, expand outdoor recreation access and the outdoor economy, and protect against wildfires. AmeriCorps also helps to save the public money on energy costs by improving energy efficiency, weatherizing homes and promoting affordable energy systems to families across the country.²

AmeriCorps programs also focus on urban areas, where we see some of the biggest outdoor disparities, where projects include supporting urban farms, developing parks, and updating infrastructure to manage stormwater and disaster relief. In rural communities, AmeriCorps programs help local farms by improving agriculture initiatives and energy and broadband infrastructure.³ For every federal dollar invested, AmeriCorps generates \$17 in U.S. - wide economic value through private matching funds and the services its members provide to students and seniors, veterans and their families, and disaster victims.

The recent action from the Administration will have severe consequences for all of these programs and initiatives. Over the last two weeks, in the area of environmental stewardship alone, the administration has terminated 82 grants over 60 organizations, totalling \$50,914,911 in grants. This has ended the opportunity for 3,469 people to serve on projects in their local communities. Many of these programs partner with our federal land agencies. These grant terminations will jeopardize their ability to complete much needed maintenance projects with these agencies and train the next generation of federal land

¹ <http://youth.gov>

² <https://americorps.gov/about/what-we-do/environmental-stewardship>

³ <https://www.americorps.gov/about/what-we-do/disaster-services-unit>

agency employees.

Many OAK members rely on funding from AmeriCorps to get young people outdoors. Through utilizing AmeriCorps positions, grants and infrastructure, members of OAK work with AmeriCorps to do the critical work of connecting youth to the outdoors, and equipping our young people with the skills, training and jobs to sustain our country's public lands and outdoor economy.

We urge you to reinstate AmeriCorps funding and rehire this critical workforce.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Hiking Society	Main Street Skowhegan
American Society of Landscape Architects	Montana Conservation Corps
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Montana Conservation NextGen
Association for Experiential Education	Mountain Bizworks
Association for Nature Center Administrators	National Association of Interpretation
Back Country Horsemen of America	National Aquarium
Brown People Camping	National Parks Conservation Association
Campaign for Environmental Literacy	Nature for All
Center for Native American Youth	Nature Worthy
Children & Nature Network	Next100 Coalition
City Parks Alliance	North American Association for Environmental
City Sprouts	Education
Climate Justice Alliance	Northwest Youth Corps
Conservation Nation	People's Justice Council
Conservation Legacy	Prairie Rivers Network
Day One	Rocky Mountain Youth Corps- NM
Earthjustice Action	Safe Routes Partnership
Endangered Species Coalition	San Jose Conservation Corps
Environment for the Americas	Seed Your Future
Friends Of Mashpee Wildlife Refuge, Inc	Service Year Alliance
Great Basin Institute	Sierra Club
Green Schoolyards America	Sierra Club Kansas Beyond Coal Campaign

Green Schools Alliance
Good Company
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Idaho Conservation Corps
Illinois Environmental Council
KABOOM!
Latino Outdoors
League of American Bicyclists

SOS Outreach
Tali Elohi
The Corps Network
The Wilderness Society
Trust for Public Land
Tuleyome
Washington Trails Association
Young, Green & Gifted