February XX, 2016

Dear XXX (Member of Congress),

I urge you to reject calls to amend the Wilderness Act to allow for the use of mountain bikes in designated Wilderness. As you may know, some mountain bikers and a mountain biking organization, the Sustainable Trails Coalition, have announced its intention to have legislation introduced in Congress to amend the Wilderness Act to allow mountain bikes in units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. I strongly urge you to oppose this effort.

These mountain bikers erroneously claim that mountain bikes were allowed in Wilderness until 1984, but then banned administratively by the U.S. Forest Service. This claim is simply not true.

The 1964 Wilderness Act (36 U.S.C. 1131-1136) banned all types of bicycles as well as all other forms of mechanical transportation in designated Wilderness. Section 4(c) of that act states, “[T]here shall be…no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, **no other form of mechanical transport**, and no structure or installation within any such area.” (emphasis added).

Furthermore, the Congress stated the purpose of the Wilderness Act was, in part, to protect these areas from “expanding settlement and **growing mechanization**….” (emphasis added) (Wilderness Act, Section 2[a].)

For over a half century, the Wilderness Act has protected wilderness areas designated by Congress from mechanization and mechanical transport, even if no motors were involved with such activities. This has meant, as Congress intended, that Wildernesses have been kept free from bicycles and other types of mechanization and mechanical transport. I believe that this protection has served our Nation well, and that the “benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness” would be forever lost by allowing mechanized transport in these areas.

Please oppose attempts to weaken the Wilderness Act and wilderness protections by allowing bicycles in Wilderness.

Sincerely,