



June 9, 2014

The Honorable Greg Walden
U.S. House of Representatives
2182 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Livestock Industry Support for the Forest Access in Rural Communities Act (H.R. 4272)

Dear Representative Walden:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) support the *Forest Access in Rural Communities Act (H.R. 4272)*. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

Your bill would stop the misguided travel management rule on national forests in the West and would promote local control over future proposals that could restrict forest access. This law would force the Forest Service to listen to local residents input before they make a decision to restrict access to public forests. Far too often, federal agencies make decisions that affect local landowners and public land permittees and ignore the input they have received, or worse, don't even allow the opportunity for input. H.R. 4272 would end this abuse of agency decision making.

The Travel Management rule requires designation of those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use. According to the Forest Service, designations will be made by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year. The final rule prohibits the use of motor vehicles off the designated system, as well as use of motor vehicles on routes and in areas that are not consistent with the designations. While the rule is supposed to address the needs for access to National Forest System lands, far too often we see decisions to close roads made at the agency level without the proper level of input from local residents. This would directly impact ranchers who hold grazing permits on Forest Service lands, as it would be impossible for them to utilize their permits and properly manage and improve the federal land that they are responsible for. Your legislation would ensure that local interests are kept at the forefront of the discussion where they belong.

PLC and NCBA applaud your efforts, and appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation’s food and fiber producers. We encourage members of Congress to support this positive and proactive piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brice Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Brice Lee
PLC President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob McCan". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the last name being more prominent.

Bob McCan
NCBA President