



January 4, 2022

The Honorable Spencer Cox
Governor
State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Governor Cox,

We are writing on behalf of The Conservation Alliance and Outdoor Alliance, which represent more than 270 businesses and ten national outdoor advocacy organizations, to express our disappointment in your current efforts to undermine protections for Utah's public lands while you simultaneously lobby to bring the Outdoor Retailer tradeshow back to Salt Lake City.

Five years ago, the outdoor industry united in an unprecedented and powerful moment, when we pulled our tradeshow out of Utah. As the state's largest tradeshow, Outdoor Retailer had been operating in Utah for over 20 years and generated roughly \$45 million per year. For many, the decision to end an economic relationship with Utah was simple. While we love the great state of Utah and its bountiful outdoor recreation resources, the decision by Utah's elected officials to demand an illegal and wildly unpopular dismantling of the Grand Staircase Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments was out of step with our industry, our values, and the way we do business.

The outdoor industry, businesses who depend on wildlands and their associated economic benefits, and millions of Americans who enjoy the outdoors, worked tirelessly for nearly a decade to secure permanent protection for Grand Staircase Escalante and Bears Ears. When those protections were rolled back in 2017, it directly undermined Tribal communities and leaders, the 3 million Americans who wrote in support of the Monuments, and the very foundation of our industry and our customers.

In October 2021, President Biden restored protections for Grand Staircase Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. This, combined with the fact that the tradeshow's contract with Denver is expiring in 2022, led us to believe that it might be an appropriate time to consider returning our tradeshow to Utah, where we could contribute millions of dollars per year to your state's economy, celebrate Utah's incredible protected public lands, and help elevate its abundant recreational opportunities. Yet, we were surprised to learn that the state has engaged a law firm to prepare litigation that seeks to undo these high priority public land protections once again. Indeed, launching an assault on our industry's most closely held values while concurrently lobbying to bring our tradeshow back to Utah is illogical and counterproductive.

Public lands have defined the American experience and serve as the backbone of the outdoor recreation economy and the outdoor industry. For hundreds of outdoor merchandisers, retailers, guides, outfitters, and other businesses who depend on wild lands and waters, undermining America's public lands damages the very infrastructure that supports our ability to make a living.

For 20 years, Utah was a popular location for Outdoor Retailer and many in our industry would love to see the show return to Salt Lake City. However, it would run contrary to the outdoor industry's values to return the show to a state that is openly hostile to public lands and waters, and that's working to undermine two iconic national monuments. If the state continues pursuing this lawsuit, leading brands and organizations in our industry will refuse to participate in a Utah-based show, even at the risk of compromising the show's future viability.

We respectfully call on you to abandon all efforts to erode protections for Grand Staircase Escalante, Bears Ears, and other Utah public lands, and instead join us in our efforts to build a strong economic vision for the West that includes conservation and outdoor recreation.

Sincerely,



Brady Robinson
The Conservation Alliance



Adam Cramer
Outdoor Alliance

CC:

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The Honorable Deb Haaland
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Herve Sedky, CEO, Emerald
Lise Aangeenbrug, Executive Director, OIA