March 11, 2015

Honorable Cynthia Lummis  
United States House of Representatives  
113 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C.  20515

Honorable Timothy Walz  
United States House of Representatives  
1034 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lummis and Representative Walz:

We are writing in support of your bipartisan legislation -- the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (H.R. 845) – that would, if enacted, expand National Forest trail maintenance efforts in the West.

Our highest priority regarding our nation’s forests is to improve forest health in order to reduce wildfire threat and improve watersheds and habitat. Congress has provided new tools and programs to facilitate state and private efforts to help the Forest Service improve the health of forests they manage.

Similarly, your bill would facilitate the use of volunteers and guides to help repair and maintain trails on Forest Service lands. In a budget constrained environment, this only makes sense.

The need for a strategy to use non-federal resources to maintain trails is clear. Only a quarter of National Forest trails are maintained to Forest Service standards, and the agency currently faces a $314 million backlog in trail maintenance.

Well maintained Forest Service trails are vital to western states’ recreation industry. They are used by hikers, horseback riders, campers, hunters, fisher-folk, and for other outdoor recreation.

Please do not hesitate to call on Western Governors if we can help get your important legislation across the finish line.

Respectfully,

Brian Sandoval  
Governor of Nevada  
Chairman, WGA