

# THE ASPEN TIMES

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## Guest commentary: Rep. Scott Tipton needs to vote for Great American Outdoors Act for benefit of CD3

Opinion **OPINION** | Tuesday, July 21, 2020

**Lisa Mascaro**  
**The Associated Press**

*Below is a list of CD3 elected officials who signed on to this letter from The Mountain Pact to Rep. Scott Tipton:*

*Snowmass Village Mayor Markey Butler, and councilors Bob Sirkus, Alyssa Shenk, Bill Madsen and Tom Goode; Basalt Mayor Bill Kane and councilors Gary Tennenbaum, Glenn Drummond, David Knight, Ryan Slack, Elyse Hottel and Bill Infante; Pitkin County Commissioner Kelly McNicholas Kury; Eagle County commissioners Kathy Chandler-Henry, Matt Scherr and Jeanne McQueeney; Crested Butte Mayor Jim Schmidt and Councilor Will Dujardin; San Migeul County commissioners Lance Waring and Hilary Cooper; Durango Councilor Barbara Noseworthy; Mountain Village Mayor Laila Benitez and councilors Dan Caton, Patrick Berry, Natalie Binder, Peter Duprey, Jack Gilbride and Marti Prohaska; Ophir Mayor Corinne Platt; Ridgway Mayor John Clark; Steamboat Springs Councilor Sonja Macys; and Telluride Mayor Delanie Young and councilors Todd Brown, Adrienne Christy, Lars Carlson and Geneva Shaunette.*

It's been quite a year. The COVID-19 virus has impacted our communities, nation and the entire world. While we navigate these challenging times, we are encouraged by the remarkably bipartisan effort in Congress to pass the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which could provide much-needed economic relief to our communities in these unsettling times.

The GAOA would fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million annually and provide much-needed funding for the crippling \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog at our national parks. Funding for GAOA comes from royalties from existing offshore oil and gas leases — not taxes.

The legislation passed the Senate in June with a bipartisan vote of 73 to 25 with support from Republican Senators Mitch McConnell, Steve Daines and Cory Gardner, along with Democrats including Sen. Michael Bennet, who has been working on addressing these issues for nearly a decade.

The companion bill in the House, which will likely come to the floor later this month, has 25 Republican co-sponsors and the support of Colorado representatives Jason Crow, Joe Neguse, Ed Perlmutter and Diana DeGeette. President Donald Trump has promised to sign the bill after it passes the House. This historic vote reflects a consensus among Americans of every stripe on the importance of our public lands for both their economic and health benefits.

Congressman Scott Tipton has said that “Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District is home to some of the most cherished public lands in the country, and we must ensure responsible management and protection of them.” No one who lives or works in his district would ever argue with that — we certainly don’t.

With that in mind, we ask Rep. Tipton to cast his vote for the GAOA when it comes to the House floor. Without question, many of our mountain towns with outdoor recreation- and tourism-based economies in his district will benefit from the increased funding for land protection and park maintenance.

The legislation is consistent with the values of the majority of District 3 constituents. LWCF has already funded the improvements at popular sites like the Ouray Hot Springs Park and Telluride River Trail. The park maintenance funding will be put to good use at District 3 public lands, including Canyons of the Ancients and Colorado National Monuments, as well as Great Sand Dunes, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and Mesa Verde National Parks.

Many of the local economies in Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District, which rely on visitors to public lands, have taken a big financial hit because of the pandemic. The increased funding for lands protections and park maintenance will help us to provide the very best for all those who visit our towns — those visitors who help drive our local economies by staying in our lodges, eating in our restaurants and shopping for outdoor gear. The GAOA will ensure that our parks, trails and public lands recover from this public health crisis and continue to be economic drivers for our communities.

We hope Congressman Tipton will vote for the GAOA and help ensure that our communities, local businesses and public lands emerge stronger when the coronavirus is finally behind us. It would be especially rewarding if our longtime representative, Congressman Tipton, is part of the historic bipartisan passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, adding to his service to Coloradans.

*Editor’s note: This op-ed, initiated the nonprofit [The Mountain Pact](#), has been signed by nearly 40 Colorado District 3 mountain town/city/county local elected officials asking Rep. Tipton to vote for the Great American Outdoors Act. For the full list, go to [aspentimes.com/opinion](https://aspentimes.com/opinion).*