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Letter: Great American Outdoors Act would provide much needed economic relief

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As we look back on the COVID-19 era, let us forget the trivial political differences that have made their way into our daily dialogue and remember the bipartisan effort in the Senate that gave us the Great American Outdoors Act. If passed by the House of Representatives and signed into law by the President, the act would fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and address the crippling \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog at our national parks.

These investments in our great outdoors and public lands could provide much-needed economic relief to our communities in these unsettling and financially precarious times. And they are investments that come from royalties from existing offshore oil and gas leases — not taxes.

The act passed the Senate in June with both of Colorado’s senators leading the way. The companion bill in the House, which will 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 Trump has promised to sign the bill. This historic effort reflects a consensus among Americans of every stripe on the importance of our public lands for both their economic and health benefits.

Congressman 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.” I wholeheartedly agree. For that reason, I am asking outgoing Rep. Tipton to cast his vote for the Great American Outdoors Act when it comes to the House floor.

Most of the local economies in Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District, including ours, have taken a big financial hit because of COVID-19. Increased funding for land protections and park maintenance will help us provide the very best for those of us who live here, and the visitors who help drive our local economy by staying in our hotels, eating in our restaurants, and shopping in our beloved downtown.

Please join me in asking Congressman Tipton to vote “yes” on the Great American Outdoors Act and help ensure that our communities, local businesses and public lands emerge stronger when COVID-19 is finally behind us.

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