



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

February 5, 2014
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2954 - Public Access and Lands Improvement Act

(Rep. Miller, R-Florida)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 2954, which is an omnibus lands bill incorporating ten separate House bills. The Administration has worked to protect and manage the responsible use of America's natural resources and to support and ensure that the Nation's spectacular landscapes, unique natural life, and cultural resources and icons endure for future generations. The Administration is working, through balanced and community-based decision-making, to maximize the value of the outdoors for all Americans.

Overall, H.R. 2954 contains a number of provisions that would undermine the responsible balance of interests and considerations in the stewardship of the Nation's lands and natural resources. Further, provisions of the bill would disregard or reduce public engagement on a range of community interests, including natural resource protections, and preclude agencies from considering less environmentally detrimental alternatives.

Most significantly, H.R. 2954 would: (1) waive all Federal laws, including those that require consultation with Federal, State, local, or tribal governments or with local residents, in order to expedite timber harvests on certain Federal lands in California; (2) reverse course on the science-based National Park Service plan, developed after a lengthy public engagement process, that provides an appropriate balance of off-road vehicle access and protection of sensitive seashore areas in North Carolina; and (3) waive review under the National Environmental Policy Act for certain actions, weakening important public involvement and planning provisions for actions affecting resources such as grazing on lands managed by the Department of the Interior.

Among other concerns, the bill would: (1) remove the protection for lands that provide natural storm barriers vital to wildlife habitat and public recreation in Florida; (2) set a troubling precedent for the management of the use of hand-propelled vessels in Yellowstone and Grand Tetons National Parks; and (3) convey a Federal interest in land in downtown Anchorage, Alaska, without compensation to the U.S. Treasury.

The Administration supports provisions that would allow for the operation of the Green Mountain Lookout in Washington State. Further, the Administration supports restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and looks forward to working with Congress to perfect related provisions.

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