

Amy Klobuchar

# U.S. Senator for Minnesota

## Klobuchar, Risch, Colleagues Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Improve the Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and James Risch (R-ID) introduced bipartisan legislation to improve the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) by increasing the transparency and ensuring the accountability of its funding program. Since 1991, the Recreational Trails Program has provided funding to states to develop and maintain outdoor recreational trails, allowing millions of Americans and their families to enjoy activities such as hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and 4-wheel driving.

**“Minnesota snowmobilers, hikers, ATV users, cyclists, and countless others who enjoy the outdoors rely on the Recreational Trails Program to explore our state’s natural wonders and support our local businesses,”** said Klobuchar. **“Our bipartisan legislation will ensure states receive the resources they deserve to protect and improve these trails for generations to come.”**

**“The Recreational Trails Program provides Idahoans and visitors to our state with access to our public lands,”** said Risch. **“This legislation ensures trail maintenance projects can continue and future generations can enjoy Idaho’s great outdoors for years to come.”**

**“From Vermont’s green mountains to Utah’s ‘Mighty Five’ National Parks, America is home to unmatched natural beauty. The Recreational Trails Program plays a vital role in helping build and maintain hiking trails across the country so folks can enjoy and explore our great outdoors,”** said Welch. **“Our bipartisan bill will support this crucial program to ensure that future generations can experience the joy of hiking our nation’s scenic trails for many years to come.”**

**“From Murphy to Manteo, North Carolina’s network of recreational trails not only attracts tourism to our state, but also allows North Carolinians to enjoy the natural beauty our state has to offer. I am proud to join Senator Klobuchar in introducing this bipartisan legislation to help maintain, improve, and expand upon the natural infrastructure of our public lands,”** said Budd.

The RTP Full Funding Act—which is supported by recreational groups from snowmobilers to cyclists and hikers to off-highway power sport vehicle users—will ensure that federal funds collected for this program are maximized to support more trail projects in the future. The bill signals strong support for bringing the Recreational Trail Program funding in line with the revenue collected from the federal gas tax already paid by off-road recreational vehicle users without impacting funding for other federal transportation programs. The legislation is co-sponsored by Senators Peter Welch (D-VT), Ted Budd (R-NC), John Curtis (R-UT), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Jeff Merkley (D-OR).

The RTP Full Funding Act will increase the accuracy and transparency of RTP funding by:

- Requiring a study to determine the total amount of funds collected;
- Improving reporting on expenditures from the RTP to improve accountability and oversight; and
- Streamlining RTP funding distribution to the states by reducing unnecessary paperwork.

The bill is supported by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC), Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), Motorcycle Industry Council, Safe & Responsible Use at the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, American Trails, International Mountain Bicycling Association, The Corps Network, International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, American Council of Snowmobile Associations, American Horse Council & American Horse Council Foundation, American Hiking Society, Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), PeopleForBikes, Back Country Horsemen of America, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Association, and Rails to Trails Conservancy.

“The Recreational Trails Program has produced tens of thousands of successes across the nation, benefiting the health, safety and enjoyment of millions of hikers and bicyclists and ATVers and snowmobilers and equestrians and more. It has forged national and regional partnerships among those who use trails – overcoming potential competition with plans that

deliver great opportunities for all. RTP projects benefit from the sharing of best practices and from widespread volunteerism and Public-Private-Partnerships. Because RTP offers flexibility in uses including maintenance and education, the program can improve other trail projects. Best of all, RTP unifies the nation across our diversity – north and south, urban and rural, young and old, Red and Blue and more, and connects more Americans to their shared legacy of public lands and waters. We thank our wonderful Congressional Champions for making this possible!” **said Marianne Fowler and Derrick Crandall, Co-Chairs of the Coalition for Recreational Trails.**

“The RTP is vitally important to trail users everywhere. The program funds trail construction, maintenance, safety, interpretation, and other important projects. The funding for this program has remained flat for too long. We would like to thank the bill sponsors for taking action to ensure that these important priorities will be fully funded,” **said Duane Taylor, Director of Safe & Responsible Use, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America.**

“The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association and the American Council of Snowmobile Associations applaud the continued leadership of Senators Klobuchar and Risch and the active support of Senators Welch, Budd, Tillis, Merkley and Curtis to return to outdoor recreation the resources required to build and maintain our recreational trail infrastructure. Their persistence in pushing for this funding partially addresses the greatest inequity contained in our federal aid highway program.

“In the past decade almost \$3 billion in revenue generated by motorized trail enthusiasts has been deposited in the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Unfortunately, the vast majority of that revenue has been diverted to infrastructure inaccessible to motorized recreational products. While the Recreational Trail Program makes a portion of that funding available for motorized trail infrastructure, it is woefully deficient.

“The public should know that 100% of the RTP funding released by the Klobuchar/ Risch legislation is generated by motorized recreation with the federal gas taxes paid every time our recreation vehicles are filled up. Only a portion of those funds are returned to the trails, with 30% guaranteed for motorized trails, 30% for non-motorized trails and 40% for multiuse trails.

“This legislation is a step in the right direction for the continued support of the trails system – and the rural communities across the United States! Thank you for your support and leadership!” **said Jaret Smith, President of the International Snowmobile Manufacturers**

**Association, and Christine Jourdain, Executive Director of the American Council of Snowmobile Associations.**

“The Recreational Trails Program is vital for building and maintaining trails for cyclists across the country. At PeopleForBikes, we strongly support more funding for all bicycle infrastructure programs and applaud the bipartisan leadership of this legislation for their support of recreational trails,” **said Jenn Dice, CEO of PeopleForBikes.**

“American Hiking Society and the 59 million strong hiking community praises the bipartisan leadership of Senators Klobuchar and Risch in support of the Recreational Trails Program! The RTP Full Funding Act of 2025 will ensure that the over three decades long impact of RTP can continue to provide the tens of millions of non-motorized and motorized trail users in urban and rural areas the benefits of trails including health and wellness, connectivity, and economic growth. Hikers and trail users across the country thank Senators Klobuchar, Risch, Budd, Welch, Tillis, Curtis, and Merkley for their support of our nation's trails!” **said Tyler Ray, Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy, American Hiking Society.**

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