



December 7, 2011

Senator Orrin Hatch
Senator Mike Lee
Representative Rob Bishop
Representative Jason Chaffetz

Subject: H.R. 3452, the Wasatch Range Recreation Access Enhancement Act

Dear Senator Hatch, Senator Lee, Representative Bishop and Representative Chaffetz,

The Great Salt Lake Audubon Chapter (GSLA) of the National Audubon Society is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat for wild birds, animals and plants and to maintaining healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the state. To those means the GSLA is providing the following comments for H.R. 3452, the Wasatch Range Recreation Access Enhancement Act.

We understand that H.R. 3452 will allow for the sale of 30 acres of federal land to allow the construction and operation of a privately held gondola called "SkiLink" to service the Canyons ski resort to Big Cottonwood Canyon ski resorts.

Based on GSLA's mission, we oppose this legislation and proposed project. Our greatest concern with this bill is the circumnavigation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the associated rigorous study and required public engagement. We are also very concerned by the precedent set by allowing the sale of publicly held land to benefit a private entity.

We understand a Preliminary Environmental Analysis has been completed for the proposed project. While the study finds a minimal impact to resources impacted by federal and state regulations, such as endangered species, we believe the study fails to identify and analyze all project impacts to the environment. For example, we are concerned with the cumulative impact of projects such as H.R. 3452 on the Wasatch National Forest.

We support the comments and concerns shared by deputy chief of staff for the U.S. Forest Service Gregory Smith, Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Coroon, and Congressman Jim Matheson.

The GSLA appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. These comments represent the views of GSLA and may not represent the views of the National Audubon Society or any other organization. Please direct any other written questions regarding this correspondence to the GSLA office at the address below.

Sincerely,

Heather Dove, President

Great Salt Lake Audubon is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat for wild birds, animals and plants, and to maintaining healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the state.

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