

**Statement for the Record  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

**House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands**

**H.R. 5665, Promoting Accessibility on Federal Lands Act**

**November 14, 2023**

H.R. 5665, the Promoting Accessibility on Federal Lands Act, directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a comprehensive assessment of trails, campsites, boat docks, and outdoor recreation facilities on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service lands to determine their accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The bill requires the Secretaries to conduct the assessment and publish it online within 180 days of the date on which appropriations are first made available for the effort. The bill also allows the Secretaries to use previous assessments as part of the comprehensive process.

***Analysis***

The Biden Administration is committed to achieving a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable country for people with disabilities. The BLM is also dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have an equitable opportunity to access their public lands by providing access to facilities, programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. As part of its multiple-use mission, the BLM conducts systematic accessibility evaluations of developed recreation sites and creates plans for corrective actions on assessed sites. The BLM also provides accessibility training and education for field staff and managers, so they are prepared to help meet the needs of visitors with disabilities.

Recently, the BLM launched a new accessibility map for facilities across multiple states on its website as part of Disability Awareness Month. This website is the first phase of an effort that the BLM plans to build upon in future stages as part of a larger project aimed at enhancing access and experiences for people with disabilities. In initiating the project, the BLM collaborated with accessibility specialists from other Department of the Interior bureaus, including the National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. The team also distributed a survey to colleagues in the field to evaluate existing data about accessible features and services at BLM facilities and sites.

These efforts and this bill also advance the goals embodied by President Biden's Executive Order 14096, *Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All*, signed in April, including ensuring that all people – regardless of race, background, income, ability, Tribal affiliation, or zip code – can benefit from the vital safeguards enshrined in our nation's foundational environmental laws, including better access to green space.

The BLM supports the goals of H.R. 5665 and looks forward to working with the Sponsor on some technical aspects of the bill, including the timeframe and resources needed for implementation, and the scope of the sites to be assessed under the measure.