

NATIONAL  
SKI AREAS  
ASSOCIATION



October 4, 2013

The Honorable Doc Hastings  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC  
Fax: 202 225 2761

**Re: Support for HR 3189**

Dear Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) in support of HR 3189, the Water Rights Protection Act. NSAA represents 121 ski areas in the U.S. that operate on National Forest System lands under a special use permit from the US Forest Service. These public land resorts accommodate the majority of skier visits in the U.S. and are located in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming. The ski industry generates \$12.2 billion in economic activity annually and is a major employer in rural economies. NSAA would like to thank the lead sponsors of this bill, Representatives Tipton, Polis, Amodei and McClintock, for their leadership on this critical issue for ski areas.

NSAA supports HR 3189 because it would prohibit the Forest Service from issuing permit clauses that require ski areas to transfer ownership of valuable water rights to the United States, or apply for water rights in the name of the United States, without compensation. Water is crucial to ski area operations. Ski areas collectively hold water rights worth over a hundred million dollars. We developed these rights through our own effort and expense, and we have no intention of surrendering ownership of these water rights to the US without compensation.

This bill would prevent the federal government from making an end run around state law by merely taking water rights that it does not own through its permitting authority. It would not only protect ski area water rights – it would protect any water rights owners that operate on federal land.

In closing, we would like to thank you for scheduling a hearing on HR 3189 and for your leadership on this issue. It means a great deal to NSAA and all ski areas across the country operating on NFS lands.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke, and a large, circular flourish to the right.

Michael Berry  
President

cc: Rep. Tipton  
Rep. Polis  
Rep. Amodei  
Rep. McClintock