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## Mark Menlove & Peter Metcalf: Senate should join House, keep climate bill on right path

READER'S VIEW: CLIMATE CHANGE

BY MARK MENLOVE AND PETER METCALF - Idaho Statesman

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Bravo, Congress!

The passage of the Waxman-Markey Climate bill is a historic, bold step in the right direction in terms of embracing innovative and sustained business practice.

Hailed globally as a "sea of change in U.S. policy on climate," this legislation will reshape energy policy by capping greenhouse gas emissions for the first time, boost production and investment in renewable electricity, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and tend to our cherished natural resources. Concurrently, the bill will create jobs in the United States and help businesses and communities hardest hit by the changes.

We commend our forward-thinking leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives and say, "Job well done."

As members of the outdoor community, our lifestyles and businesses are direct links to "indicator activities" such as climbing, paddling, mountain biking, hiking and backcountry skiing - all of which connect people to the landscapes and ecosystems threatened by a changing climate. While the economic downturn has provided challenges in our business environment, it also has brought into sharp focus the interconnection between thriving public lands, a healthy climate and the nation's future financial security.

The millions of people and thousands of leading-edge businesses that make up the outdoor community know from our activities and market ventures that innovation and embracing change are the keys to success. Furthermore, common sense dictates that conservation education, access to healthy public lands and sustainable recreation will help offset the burdens and challenges we face with the many-decade venture of protecting the climate.

Clearly, the financial contribution of the active outdoor recreation economy is not to be underestimated. A 2006 study by the Outdoor Industry Association shows that active outdoor recreation contributes more than \$730 billion to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.5 million jobs nationally and provides \$49 billion in annual tax revenue.

As the climate bill moves to the Senate and onward, we trust that aside from fixing the climate and revolutionizing how we power our world, an added benefit might be a revived connection between Americans and our lands and waters. We encourage the Senate to follow the House's lead and make sure that taking care of public lands is part of the mix. Not only is taking care of our natural resources, quite simply, the right thing to do, but healthy lands provide a business climate that generates a real return on investment. Thriving, accessible environments are a direct and tangible benefit to all of us.

The two of us have spent countless days in the mountains and have staked our professional lives to the passions we pursue outdoors. We know the forethought, planning and willpower behind a first ascent of a previously unclimbed peak or a safe descent of a steep, avalanche-prone slope. We can only imagine the grit and courage it must take as a legislator to wrestle with such an overwhelming issue, and we offer heartfelt thanks to Congress for leading the way.

As we move forward, we acknowledge the criticism this bill faces, yet we believe that all worthy objectives require belief to pursue the goal and effort to ensure it. As members of the outdoor community, we echo our colleagues' sentiments and extend our encouragement as the climate bill heads to the Senate.

Mark Menlove is a founder of Outdoor Alliance, a coalition representing recreation interests. He also is executive director of Winter Wildlands. Peter Metcalf is CEO and founder of employee-owned Black Diamond Equipment Ltd., a global manufacturing leader in recreational products.