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**Written Statement Submitted by The Pew Charitable Trusts to the
Senate Energy and Natural Resource
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining**

**For the record of the legislative hearing held on June 7, 2022
Regarding S. 387, S. 2254, S. 3144, S. 3670, and S. 4080**

The Pew Charitable Trusts seeks to preserve ecologically and culturally significant U.S. public lands and rivers through legislative designations, as well as federal and state administrative protections. To accomplish these goals, we work closely with Indigenous tribes and diverse stakeholders—such as local businesses, local governments, the outdoor recreation industry, travel and tourism organizations, veterans, sportsmen and women—to develop collaborative solutions that protect landscapes and local communities.

Pew supports S. 387, the Grand Canyon Protection Act. This legislation would enact a permanent mineral withdrawal for approximately 1 million acres of federally managed land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park in northern Arizona. It builds on a 20-year moratorium issued in 2012, following an extensive public process, for new mining claims.

The Grand Canyon region has sustained Indigenous communities for thousands of years and continues to hold spiritual and cultural importance to at least 11 Tribes in the region. The landscape also provides clean drinking water to millions of people living downstream, supports agricultural operations, provides habitat for endangered species such as the California condor and humpback chub, and offers opportunities for outdoor recreation that drive local economies. For example, in 2020, the Park welcomed over three million visitors who spent \$33 million in local communities, supporting more than 5,700 jobs.

Uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region has contaminated land and water and impacted public health, particularly in tribal communities. In 2005, the Navajo Nation banned uranium mining and processing on its land, citing its “painful and deadly legacy.” Other area Tribes have since enacted bans. Proposed uranium mining on federally managed lands in the area continues to threaten critical land and water resources, including sacred sites and the sole water source for the Havasupai Tribe.

S.387 is supported by Indigenous Tribes and Inter-Tribal organizations—including the 21 member Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, local government leaders, Coconino County, businesses, veterans, faith leaders, hunting and angling groups, outdoor recreation organizations, and conservation groups.

Pew supports S. 2254, the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act. S. 2254 would add 20 rivers and 385 river miles in the upper Missouri and Yellowstone river systems to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Among the iconic rivers that would gain protection from this legislation are the Boulder, Gallatin, Madison, Smith and Yellowstone. All these waterways were found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic designation during recent lands management planning processes by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) or U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Montana’s free-flowing rivers and clean water are critical to the state’s prosperity, residents’ way of life, and its flourishing fish and wildlife. They provide water for drinking, irrigation, and world-class recreation. Montana’s agriculture and rapidly growing \$7.1 billion outdoor recreation economy thrive on healthy rivers and clean water.

S. 2254 is the result of extensive outreach to stakeholders in Montana and has been formally endorsed by over 3,000 individual Montanans, 1,300 Montana businesses, five county commissions, the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM), Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (MOGA), Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, and Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, which represents ten tribes in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

Pew supports S. 3144, Sutton Mountain and Painted Hills Area Wildfire Resiliency Preservation and Economic Enhancement Act. This bill would designate a 66,000-acre National Monument on Sutton Mountain in central Oregon, protecting its ridges, plateaus, grasslands, and rivers, balancing the conservation of pristine wild lands in the proposed monument’s Upper Unit with continued economic activity and projects to restore ecological health and build watershed resilience in the monument’s Lower Unit.

S. 3144 would protect and restore the area’s fish and wildlife, protect its cultural resources, and preserve the area’s abundant recreational opportunities, while leveraging past and current investments to conserve this landscape and the ecological and economic benefits it provides.

Pew supports S. 3670, the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act. S. 3750 is comprehensive, balanced legislation that takes into consideration multiple interests and views of those who live, work, or visit the greater Gila region. The bill would permanently protect the Gila River, San Francisco River, and their main tributaries in the Gila National Forest and nearby lands that are critical for watershed protection. Adding these rivers to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System will safeguard the Gila's natural flows, which support outstanding examples of southwest riparian forest; some of the greatest non-coastal breeding

bird diversity and density in the United States; and a nearly intact native fish community that includes the endangered loach minnow and spike dace, and the threatened Gila trout.

A study conducted by Southwick Associates estimated that \$3.1 billion is spent on outdoor recreation in the combined Gila and San Francisco River region. This spending stimulates economic activity that supports more than 28,500 jobs in New Mexico, \$661.4 million in income, \$165.1 million in state and local tax revenues, and is associated with approximately \$1 billion of value added to the state's economy.

Tourism is the state's second largest industry, and according to the New Mexico Tourism Department, over half of all overnight visitors to the state engage in outdoor activities. Towns like Silver City rely on healthy lands and rivers to draw visitors and businesses alike to build a diverse and durable economy.

The effort to conserve the Gila and San Francisco Rivers enjoys the support of numerous entities, including private landowners, over 150 local businesses, and many thousands of New Mexican citizens. The breadth of support reflects the comprehensive outreach and collaborative approach the bill's sponsors have taken, including a lengthy public comment period, dozens of open community meetings hosted by their Senators, and direct communication with the regions' largest employers. Silver City and other local municipalities have all passed unanimous resolutions in support of the bill. The Grant County Commission – the county primarily affected by the bill and home to the majority of the proposed protections – passed a similar resolution in September 2019. The Fort Sill Apache Tribe, and the All Pueblo Council of Governors, which represents all 20 Native American Pueblos in the State of New Mexico support these protections. We appreciate the Senators' continued leadership and their commitment to protecting the critical recreational, ecological, historic, and economic values of the Gila and San Francisco Rivers and look forward to working with them and with the committee to improve and advance this legislation.

Pew supports S. 4080, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act. This legislation would add 3,925 acres to the existing Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in California, originally designated in 2015. It would also rename the "Walker Ridge" tract managed by the BLM to "Condor Ridge (Molok Luyuk)," recognizing the name in the Patwin language of the Yocha Dehe people. Molok Luyuk is home to rare plant species and provides habitat and movement areas for wildlife such as tule elk, deer, mountain lions, and golden eagles. It is also an increasingly popular recreation area for locals and visitors alike, who can enjoy stunning wildflower blooms and scenic views from the top of the ridge.

S. 4080 would also require the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to engage in meaningful consultation with federally recognized Indigenous tribes in the development and implementation of the monument's management plan. It provides opportunities for those federal agencies to enter into voluntary agreements with federally recognized Indigenous tribes regarding the management of the monument.

The bill is supported by the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, the Lake County Board of Supervisors, and local community members and nonprofit organizations.

Contacts:

Thank you for the Subcommittee's consideration of Pew's views on these bills. We welcome the opportunity to work together to improve and move them forward.

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