For Immediate Release  
Saturday, November 19, 2004  
Contact Brian Kennedy or Matt Streit at (202) 226-9019  

Recreation Fee Demonstration Bill  
Passes House  

Washington, DC - Today the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3283, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, introduced by Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH). The bill will improve recreational facilities and visitor opportunities on federal recreational lands by reinvesting receipts from fair and consistent recreational fees and passes.

"This legislation ensures continued access to recreational opportunities on our federal land while protecting the public's pocketbook," said House Committee on Resources Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA). "We have given federal land managers the ability to assess reasonable fees for specific activities and uses. This bill will put an end to fears that fees will be misused by federal land managers since we have laid out very specific circumstances under which these fees can be collected and subsequently reinvested."

The Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (Rec Fee Demo) was originally proposed in 1996 as a tool to generate needed revenue to manage the growing occurrence of recreation on public land. The program has been both praised and assailed by federal land users. Since its inception, federal land managers have been able to actively reinvest fees assessed into the site or activities used.

After numerous concerns and reauthorizations, the House Resources Committee, the committee with authorizing jurisdiction, undertook reauthorizing the Rec Fee Program. Rep. Regula's bill will extend the program for 10 years and specifically states where and what a fee may and may not be charged for, while also establishing types of fees.

The bill also incorporates public participation by establishing Recreation Advisory Committees that will consist of members of the local government and recreation community. This group will provide recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior regarding the establishment, elimination, or adjustment of a fee. Additionally, a Federal Lands Pass will be established for all entrance and amenity fees for federal lands.

###