

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2776

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal land and to the airspace over that land.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 17, 2003

Mr. OTTER (for himself, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. NETHERCUTT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal land and to the airspace over that land.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Backcountry Landing  
5 Strip Access Act”.

**6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Aircraft landing strips serve an essential  
2 safety role as emergency landing areas.

7 (3) Aircraft landing strips serve an essential  
8 purpose in search and rescue, forest and ecological  
9 management, research, and aerial mapping.

10 (4) Aircraft landing strips serve an essential  
11 role in firefighting and disaster relief.

18 SEC. 3. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS AF-  
19 FECTING AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS.

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Neither the Secretary of the Inte-  
21 rior nor the Secretary of Agriculture shall take any action  
22 which would permanently close or render or declare as un-  
23 serviceable any aircraft landing strip located on Federal  
24 land under the administrative jurisdiction of either Sec-  
25 retary unless—

18 (b) NATIONAL POLICY.—Not later than 2 years after  
19 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
20 the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

3 (c) REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICIES.—A policy affect-  
4 ing air access to an aircraft landing strip located on Fed-  
5 eral land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the  
6 Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, including the pol-  
7 icy required by subsection (b), shall not take effect unless  
8 the policy—

9 (1) states that the Federal Aviation Adminis-  
10 tration has the sole authority to control aviation and  
11 airspace over the United States; and

12 (2) seeks and considers comments from State  
13 governments and the public.

14 (d) MAINTENANCE OF AIRSTRIPS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inter-  
16 rior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult  
17 with—

22 (B) other interested parties,  
23 to ensure that such aircraft landing strips are main-  
24 tained in a manner that is consistent with the re-  
25 source values of the adjacent area.

6 (e) EXCHANGES OR ACQUISITIONS.—Closure or pur-  
7 poseful neglect of any aircraft landing strip, or any other  
8 action which would render any aircraft landing strip un-  
9 serviceable, shall not be a condition of any Federal acqui-  
10 sition of or exchange involving private property upon which  
11 the aircraft landing strip is located.

12 (f) NEW AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS NOT CRE-  
13 ATED.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to create  
14 or authorize additional aircraft landing strips.

15 (g) PERMANENTLY CLOSE.—For the purposes of this  
16 Act, the term “permanently close” means any closure the  
17 duration of which is more than 180 days in any calendar  
18 year.

19 (h) APPLICABILITY.—

6 (i) FAA AUTHORITY NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in  
7 this Act shall be construed to affect the authority of the  
8 Federal Aviation Administration over aviation or airspace.

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