

Government puts outdoor industry size at \$373B

By Frederick Reimers, Outside

The outdoor recreation economy is officially a big deal. On Wednesday, the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released numbers detailing the economic power of the outdoor recreation industry, showing it comprises 2 percent (\$373.7 billion) of the entire 2016 U.S. gross domestic product.

It's an impressive figure that puts it on the scale of industries like construction (4.3 percent); legal services (1.3 percent); agriculture, including farming, forestry, and fishing (1 percent); and, most significantly, mining, oil, and gas extraction (1.4 percent). The report also stipulates that the outdoor industry is growing by 3.8 percent, a faster rate than the overall economy (2.8 percent).

The BEA report was two years in the making, initiated when President Barack Obama signed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act. Signed in 2016, it directed the federal agency to measure the outdoor economy with the same tools it uses to chart other industries and the economy as a whole.

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