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US legislation calls for sustainable outdoor apparel

COLORADO – [14.07.09] The US-based Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) has welcomed the introduction of the US Outdoor Act, groundbreaking legislation that is the culmination of two years of development and consultation between OIA, outdoor industry apparel manufacturers, the US textile industry and Congress.

As well as removing tariffs on recreational-use performance outerwear apparel not currently made in the US, the Act also calls on companies that benefit from the reduced tariffs to contribute a portion of these savings toward research programs that develop ways to keep America's apparel industry competitive and more environmentally sustainable.

Introduced by the Democratic Congressman for Oregon Earl Blumenauer, once passed, the legislation will aid brands such as Columbia, REI, North Face and others looking to reduce costs, improve the quality of their goods and implement sustainable processes.

This will be done by the creation of the Sustainable Textile and Apparel Research (STAR) fund, which will invest revenue generated in a training program that specialises in lean manufacturing technologies and supply chain analysis, including helping companies work towards minimising energy and water use, reducing waste and carbon emissions and incorporating sustainable practices into a product's entire life cycle.


"Columbia Sportswear Company is proud to offer its support to the US Outdoor Act," said Tim Boyle, president and chief executive officer of Columbia Sportswear. "This well-designed piece of legislation goes even further by creating a market-based mechanism to generate funds that will help support critical research to keep America in the forefront of sustainable apparel manufacturing practices."

"(The act) represents a commitment to the 6.5 million jobs in the active outdoor recreation industry, the economic viability of the thousands of outdoor businesses across the country and the millions of Americans seeking healthy and active lifestyles through outdoor recreation," added OIA president and CEO Frank Hugelmeyer. "But this bill is also an investment in the United States as a global leader in the sustainable, eco-friendly business practices that are core values of the outdoor industry and the future of our economy. We look forward to enactment of this important legislation."



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