



September 12, 2019

Senator Brian Schatz
Chair, Democrats Special Committee on the Climate Crisis
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: The Fight to Save Winter: Professional Athletes for Climate Action, Testimony for the Democrats Special Committee on the Climate Crisis from Protect Our Winters Founder, Professional Snowboarder, and Jones Snowboards CEO Jeremy Jones

Good afternoon Chairman Schatz and members of the Special Committee on the Climate Crisis. My name is Jeremy Jones, and I am a professional snowboarder, CEO of Jones Snowboards, and the founder of the climate advocacy non-profit, Protect Our Winters.

Though I now thrive in the vertical world, I grew up near sea level on Cape Cod. I spent my time exploring the coast, and at some point, my family started piling into the car every weekend to ski in Vermont. My parents fell in love with the mountains, from the exposure to the raw elements to the outdoor recreation lifestyle, so at an early age, my brothers and I were hooked. The mountains quickly worked their magic on me, too.

I first saw a snowboard in 1982 when I was nine years old: it was in the basement of a Shaw's General Store. Little did I know; the sport of snowboarding was about to explode. Fast forward five years, and I was winning snowboard racing competitions and topping the junior division championships hosted at Sugarbush. My childhood was spending weekdays living at 200 feet skateboarding and surfing, and spending weekends riding the 4,000 foot peaks of the Green Mountains. I've been living the sideways lifestyle and going higher ever since.

Though I worked hard in my racing career, as soon as a competition ended, I'd head out and explore the rest of the mountain. Freeriding has always run deep in my blood and it has led me to explore mountains all over the world.

Living your life in the mountains doesn't afford you the opportunity to deny climate change. Its impacts are front and center, every day. It was the incessant image of mountain environments changing, glaciers receding, snowpack declining, and seasons shortening that led me to start the climate advocacy non-profit Protect Our Winters in 2007. Though I'm comfortable dropping into a 60-degree slope, starting POW scared me. I had no formal experience in starting a non-profit. But, I was wholeheartedly convinced that the snowsports industry needed a unified front to fight climate change, and I was willing to stick my neck out in pursuit of turning passionate outdoor people into effective climate advocates. Besides, who better to take on this fight but a community who thrives in accomplishing the impossible?

In July 2017, the EPA and the University of Colorado published a study showing that across the country, virtually all locations are projected to see reductions in winter recreation season length up to 50% by 2050 and 80% by 2090. To translate, that means Tahoe's four-month ski season would be reduced to just about three weeks in our children's lifetimes.

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Let's not forget that snowsports is big business. According to the 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, nationwide, the snowsports industry generates \$72 billion annually and supports 695,000 jobs. I should point out that means the snowsports economy is responsible for almost 70,000 more American jobs than our country's extractive industries.

Unfortunately, climate change is decimating far more than just our winter tourism economy. If the snowpack is not sufficient to keep stream temperatures low, warmer rivers diminish fish habitat and fishing. Rivers have less water, reducing stream flow and making water harder to navigate for boats. Rising temperatures, poor air quality, and rampant wildfire impacts trail sports, including mountain biking, hiking, and running. These changes already impact rural economies nationwide who rely on outdoor tourism for economic security.

For the past two decades, I have called Truckee, California home. There, in 2010, I founded a snowboard manufacturing company. That means I run one of the many small businesses in mountain towns that depend on a stable climate and snowy winters. With every inconsistent winter, my community's economy suffers. Snow is our currency.

At Protect Our Winters, we lead a community of professional athletes and influencers, forward-thinking business leaders, and outdoor enthusiasts to affect systemic political solutions to climate change. We know the technology to solve the climate crisis largely exists. We know deploying that technology requires the political will to pass such legislation. We know that creating political will requires a cultural shift. And at POW, we are committed to creating this very cultural shift.

We are here today to demand progress on climate action. If, as lawmakers, you want to work with national influencers whose careers are dependent on a stable climate, look no further. If you want statistics as to how climate change impacts an outdoor retailer's business bottom line, look no further. Our community is ready and willing to support your work toward a carbon neutral future. Because together, we can protect our winters. Thank you.