**Outdoor Retailer is leaving Utah over public lands issues, a move Herbert calls ‘offensive’**

By [ERIN ALBERTY](http://www.sltrib.com/staff/erin-alberty/) | The Salt Lake Tribune 

First Published Feb 16 2017 05:09PM    •    Updated 55 minutes ago

(Leah Hogsten | The Salt Lake Tribune) Outdoor Retailer Summer Market trade show for outdoor industry’s manufacturers and retail buyers, August 3, 2016, at the Salt Palace Convention Center.

**Trade show leaving » Amid accusations of “false narrative” and harming “American heritage,” Herbert and outdoor recreation business execs fail to find commmon ground on public-land policy.**

     

Share This Article

The Outdoor Retailer show is leaving Salt Lake City.

After an unproductive meeting between Gov. Gary Herbert and outdoor recreation business representatives, industry leaders say they hope to find a new location for the Outdoor Retailer shows "as soon as possible."

"Unfortunately, what we heard from Gov. Herbert was more of the same," according to a written statement by the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), which has close ties to the massive, twice-yearly shows in Salt Lake City.

"It is clear that the governor indeed has a different perspective on the protections of public lands from that of our members and the majority of Western state voters, both Republicans and Democrats — that's bad for our American heritage, and it's bad for our businesses. We are therefore continuing our search for a new home as soon as possible."

VIDEOS

TOP JOBS



[**CLEARFIELD JOBS CORPS**
RN...](http://jobs.sltrib.com/jobs/details/RN/1116)[**CLEARFIELD JOBS CORPS**
Bus Driver...](http://jobs.sltrib.com/jobs/details/BusDriver/1117)[**United States District Court For Th**
INTAKE/GENERALIST CLERK...](http://jobs.sltrib.com/jobs/details/INTAKE/GENERALISTCLERK/1099)[**Jeremiah Rex Smith Construction, LL**
Concrete Finishers...](http://jobs.sltrib.com/jobs/details/ConcreteFinishers/1121)[**Park City Municipal Transit Departm**
Transit Driver...](http://jobs.sltrib.com/jobs/details/TransitDriver/1086)

[Check out all of the Trib Top Jobs](http://jobs.sltrib.com/topJobs)

The show's owner, Emerald Expositions, said in a news release that it would not include Utah in its request for proposals from cities hoping to host the trade shows, which bring about 40,000 visitors and $45 million to Salt Lake City each year.

"Salt Lake City has been hospitable to Outdoor Retailer and our industry for the past 20 years, but we are in lockstep with the outdoor community and are working on finding our new home," said Marisa Nicholson, show director for Outdoor Retailer.

Emerald Expositions also was considering Utah for the annual Interbike trade show, presently held in Las Vegas, but it no longer will accept the state's proposal to host the event, said Executive Vice President Darrell Denny.

The "offensive" decision, said Herbert spokesman Paul Edwards, "reflects a gross ingratitude."

"It perpetuates the false narrative that Utah — a state that derives much of its inspiration and identity from its iconic public lands, a state that invests tens of millions of dollars into the protection of and access to its public lands — is somehow hostile to those public lands," Edwards said in an email Thursday night. "It shows how a political agenda, rather than reason or merit, seems to have captured the decision-making at the Outdoor Industry Association."

OIA Executive Director Amy Roberts said "it is important to our membership, and to our bottom line, that we partner with states and elected officials who share our views on the truly unique American value of public lands for the people and conserving our outdoor heritage for the next generation."

The OIA said it specifically asked Herbert for four measures that outdoor businesses consider important to their future in Utah:

• End legal efforts or support for congressional action that would facilitate the sale or transfer of federal lands to the states.

• End efforts to nullify the Antiquities Act.

• Stop seeking to reverse the designation of Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah. Herbert this month signed a resolution from the Utah Legislature asking President Donald Trump to rescind the monument designation.

• Support other public lands "that provide the backbone of the industries sales," OIA wrote.

Herbert did not agree, Roberts said.

"For 20 years ... we feel like we've been a good partner and very upfront about our [member concerns]," Roberts said, "and what we've seen is sort of a ratcheting up over time in actions either by the Utah Legislature or the congressional delegation that really start to threaten public lands and the public's access to the lands."

The call focused on the state's position on the Bears Ears designation, said Edwards, Herbert's deputy chief of staff.

Herbert "offered the opportunity ... to work through a negotiation process with the outdoor industry about what seem to be differences about the state's position with regard to the use of the Antiquities Act here in the state," Edwards said, referring to the federal law enabling presidents to declare national monuments.

"Instead of accepting," Edwards said, "we felt that we were being presented with an ultimatum that there be a full rescinding of the resolution passed by the Legislature and the governor with regard to the concerns we have about the Bears Ears designation."

Utah Democratic Party Chairman Peter Corroon decried the state's stand over public lands and on the Bears Ears designation.

"With one breath, Gov. Herbert touts our five, now six, national monuments to increase tourism, and with another refuses to drop the party lines for the betterment of Utah's economy," Corroon said in a news release. "After listening to our Utah Republican leadership talk out of both sides of their mouths for years, the outdoor retailers finally put their foot down."

Salt Lake City Council member Charlie Luke took a less partisan angle in saying the decision "is a huge loss."

"While I have been frustrated at times with OR's past negotiating tactics, Utah putting politics before economic development has led to the end of a successful decadeslong partnership with the outdoor industry," Luke said in a news release. "The same politics that caused OR to leave has probably also killed any future opportunity for Salt Lake City to host the Winter Olympics again."

Outdoor Retailer's exit also will leave a void for eateries that get big business from conventiongoers, said Michele Corigliano, executive director of the Salt Lake Area Restaurant Association.

"We are hoping, perhaps, they can get some other conventions to come into town to make up for it, but, as you know, those weeks — those two Outdoor Retailer shows — had a tremendous impact on our downtown restaurants. We're super sad to see them go. I hope our legislators take that into consideration, because it affects us all."

Denver appears to be making an aggressive bid for the show. Conservation Colorado placed a half-page ad in The Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret News on Wednesday, urging the event to move to Colorado.

"We have stronger beer. We have taller peaks. We have higher recreation," the ad reads. "But most of all, we love our public lands. ... We have honored and fought for our public lands by defeating land seizure bills and embracing new national monuments. ... Colorado knows protecting public lands is just good business."

The Park City-based SnowSports Industries America added to Colorado's campaign after Thursday's conference call, announcing that it was inviting the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market to join SIA's annual January snow in Denver, forming a joint convention.

Edwards said Salt Lake City remains an ideal venue for the show, which has been here for about two decades.

"Gov. Herbert did an extraordinary job of representing the great opportunities here in Utah and the extraordinary assets that we have here: the love that we have for our public lands, the numerous ways in which we work with our federal partners ... to invest in habitat, to invest in access, to what are truly unrivaled public lands," Edwards said.

Visit Salt Lake CEO Scott Beck said Herbert made a good-faith effort to engage the industry leaders in the call.

"I watched our governor just really put rhetoric aside and really reach across the table to start some genuine dialogue," Beck said. "One of the things that I noted in this process, there's been a lack of genuine dialogue."

ealberty@sltrib.com

Twitter: [@erinalberty](http://twitter.com/erinalberty)

— Salt Lake Tribune reporter Tiffany Frandsen contributed to this story