



July 9, 2019

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Derek Kilmer
1410 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Dear Senator Murray and Representative Kilmer:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, we write to share our strong support for the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (S. 1382 and H.R. 2642).

The Wild Olympics legislation would protect 126,500 acres of Wilderness and 464 river miles as Wild and Scenic on the Olympic Peninsula and preserve salmon streams and wild lands adjacent to Olympic National Park. In addition to its conservation values, the bill protects hundreds of miles of trails, scores of climbing sites, dozens of whitewater paddling destinations, and valued backcountry ski terrain.

The Olympic Peninsula, with Olympic National Park and the adjacent Forest Service lands and rivers, is an important part of the outdoor recreation landscape in Washington, and preserving these iconic lands and rivers will benefit our growing outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor recreation in Washington generates \$26.2 billion in annual consumer spending and supports 201,600 direct jobs. Several of our member companies and partner groups have been deeply engaged in the Wild Olympics initiative, demonstrating the direct connection between protected federal lands and outdoor business. Your legislation is an investment in our economic future.

While most of the prime Olympic Peninsula mountaineering destinations are within the Olympic National Park, several summits and crags of interest lay outside of existing Park and Wilderness boundaries on the Olympic National Forest. The Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act promises to provide lasting protection to places valued by climbers, locally and around the world. Proposed additions to the Mount Skokomish Wilderness, for example, will protect scrambling and climbing objectives such as Mt. Washington, Mt. Pershing, Jefferson Peak, Mt. Ellinor, and the nearby Ellinor Towers. In the spring, Mt. Ellinor is known as a destination for backcountry skiers.

For whitewater paddlers, the region is unique because the watersheds that radiate out from the Olympic Mountains receive several feet of precipitation each year, providing an incredible number of river miles in a small geographic area. Dozens of whitewater runs pass through towering ancient forests and moss-covered gorges. The rivers also serve as a conveyor belt for sand that forms the beaches and surf breaks on the wild Washington Coast.

Because of the collaborative approach employed in the bill's development, embracing input from local and national mountain biking stakeholders among others, the legislation enjoys broad support from the mountain biking community. We are particularly pleased to support legislation that designates Wilderness while also using other protective designations where appropriate. The mountain biking loop trail along the Dungeness River passes through ancient forests and along the banks of a wild river. By including the trail within the Wild and Scenic river corridor but outside of proposed Wilderness, a designation is applied that will protect and enhance the mountain biking experience alongside conservation values.

Special wild places form the bedrock of our outdoor economy, and we applaud your leadership in protecting the lands and rivers in your Wild Olympics proposal. We stand ready to help move this initiative across the finish line. Together, we can ensure that the outdoor recreation economy—and the companies that drive it—will continue to thrive in Washington.



Best regards,

Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

Kirsten Blackburn
Advocacy Manager
The Conservation Alliance

Patricia Rojas-Ungar
Vice President, Government Affairs
Outdoor Industry Association



Our Organizations

Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

The Conservation Alliance

The Conservation Alliance is an organization of like-minded businesses whose collective contributions support grassroots environmental organizations and their efforts to protect wild places where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Alliance funds have played a key role in protecting rivers, trails, wildlands and climbing areas. Membership in the Alliance is open to all companies who care about protecting our most threatened wild places for habitat and outdoor recreation. Since its inception in 1989, The Conservation Alliance has contributed more than \$21 million, helped to protect more than 51 million acres of wildlands; protect 3,107 miles of rivers; stop or remove 34 dams; designate five marine reserves; and purchase 14 climbing areas. For complete information on The Conservation Alliance, see www.conservationalliance.com.

Outdoor Industry Association

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is the national trade association for the outdoor industry and is the title sponsor of Outdoor Retailer, the largest outdoor products tradeshow in North America. OIA serves over 1,300 manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers through a focus on international trade and public lands and recreation policy, sustainable business innovation and outdoor participation.