

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murkowski and Cassidy and Ranking Member Cantwell and Heinrich

The Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition and Washington Trails Association — all human-powered recreation organizations in Washington State — come together as a coalition on issues relating to recreation, access and conservation. As Washington Outdoor Alliance, we represent more than 35,000 members who recreate on public lands. We write to express support for the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area Act, as introduced into U.S. Congress by Senator Maria Cantwell in June, 2015, which seeks to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the State of Washington.

The Mountains to Sound Greenway is an outdoor paradise stretching from the Seattle to Ellensburg. It includes 1,600 miles of trails, excellent whitewater runs, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing, rock climbing routes, and mountain biking opportunities. The Greenway is accessed by members of all of our organizations to enjoy these activities, and is an important driver of Washington's recreation economy.

National Heritage Area designation would help the different land agencies in the area better collaborate on management – from trail maintenance to trailhead parking and educational resources. This would have a significant positive impact for this area that is experiencing increasing popularity and use. Designation would also promote local economic growth from tourism and outdoor recreation, and provides a flexible strategy to encourage residents, government agencies, nonprofit groups and private partners to collaboratively plan and implement projects to preserve a landscape, without affecting private property rights.

In spring of 2015, more than 3,100 of our members signed a petition in support of National Heritage Designation.

In short, the Mountains to Sound Greenway is integral to outdoor recreation in the Pacific Northwest and we support National Heritage Area designation to help protect this resource.

Sincerely,

Joe Sambataro, *NW Regional Director*,
Access Fund

Eddie Espinosa, *Western States Manager*,
American Alpine Club,

Thomas O'Keefe, *Northwest Stewardship Director*,
American Whitewater

Gus Bekker, *President*,
El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club,

Yvonne Kraus, *Executive Director*,
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance,

Katherine Hollis, *Conservation and Advocacy Director*,
The Mountaineers

Matt Perkins, *Board Member*,
Washington Climbers Coalition

Andrea Imler, *Advocacy Director*,
Washington Trails Association