



November 16, 2020

Representative Pramila Jayapal
 1510 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Re: Wild Olympics Addition to the National Defense Authorization Act

Dear Representative Jayapal

The undersigned 36 progressive and environmental organizations, elected officials and local businesses or organizations representing or serving your constituents are writing to urge you to help ensure that the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 2642 & S. 1382) and other public lands bills are included in the final National Defense Authorization Act when it emerges from the pending House-Senate Conference Committee.

We appreciate and applaud your earlier support for getting Representative DeGette’s and Representative Neguse’s amendments included in the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 6395) prior to the bill passing the House of Representatives. These amendments will protect public lands and rivers in California, Washington, Colorado, and Arizona, including Rep. Derek Kilmer’s (D-WA06) and Senator Patty Murray’s (D-WA) Wild Olympics bill.

Our ancient forests and wild rivers offer priceless natural amenities that make the Northwest such a wonderful place to live, and indeed, give the Evergreen State its name. They provide clean water, scenic beauty, solitude, fish and wildlife habitat, world-class outdoor recreation opportunities, and an unrivaled quality of life for our region.

The Wild Olympics would help protect the economic future for the Olympic Peninsula and the Puget Sound. The streams and waterways of the Olympic Peninsula support a vibrant fishing and shellfish industry, attract millions of dollars in tourism annually, support a thriving outdoor industry, and provide clean drinking water to local residents. They provide the stunning scenery and a high “Quality of Life” that attracts entrepreneurs, skilled workers, new residents, and investment in our communities.

These free-flowing rivers and streams are also vital to the long-term health and recovery of Hood Canal and Puget Sound. Acting to safeguard our healthy watersheds now is far less costly than restoring degraded watersheds later. By granting these natural treasures the permanent protection they lack today, the legislation makes a down payment on the economic future of generations to come.

The Wild Olympics is a balanced proposal built on feedback from local stakeholders over years of discussions. The legislation strikes a balance between providing lasting and durable protection for the remaining intact watersheds on the Olympic Peninsula while preserving and enhancing existing recreational access and ensuring no impact to current timber jobs. The proposal also takes preserving public access to trails and recreational destinations seriously. No existing roads are included in the proposed Wilderness and the proposal will not impact the current Forest Service decision-making process related to travel management.

That is why the legislation has garnered more than 800 local endorsements from conservation, recreation and wildlife groups, hunters and anglers, local businesses, elected officials, faith leaders, and other stakeholders. Several local Tribes have also formally endorsed the proposal because it has been written to protect their tribal treaty rights and protect the fish wildlife and natural resources that are essential to preserve their tribal lifeways. In addition, more than 21,000 individuals from Washington State have supported the proposal including more than 12,000 from the Olympic Peninsula alone.

America's public lands help define us as a nation. The proposals in these amendments, including Wild Olympics, are supported by Native American tribes, business owners, local elected officials, veterans, scientists, conservationists, outdoor recreationists and other local residents who are asking Congress to preserve access to the health and spiritual benefits of natural areas, safeguard clean water sources, and boost local recreation and tourism economies and attract businesses and skilled workers to our local communities.

Thank you for successfully championing the effort to see these important public land conservation measures voted into the National Defense Authorization Act to preserve these exceptional places as a natural legacy for future generations. I urge you to please fight to ensure these vital amendments remain part of the NDAA as it moves through the Conference Committee.

Sincerely,

Harry Romberg
National Forest Committee Chair
Sierra Club- Washington Chapter

Iris Zacarías
Washington State Program Coordinator
Latino Outdoors

Tom Uniack
Executive Director
Washington Wild

Joe Sambataro
Northwest Regional Director
Access Fund

Hilary Eisen
Policy Director
Winter Wildlands Alliance

Ashley Siple
Board President
Washington Climbers Coalition

Dave Werntz
Science and Conservation Director
Conservation Northwest

Scott Underwood
Director
Olympic Peninsula Climbers

James Moschella
Policy and Planning Manager
Washington Trails Association

Annalise Wille
Co-founder
Women for Wild Lands

Tim McNulty
Vice President
Olympic Parks Associates

J. Michelle Swope
Washington Regional Director
Native Fish Society

Kathleen S. Gobush, PhD
Director, Northwest Program
Defenders of Wildlife

Betsy Robblee
Conservation & Advocacy Director
The Mountaineers

Megan Birzell
Washington State Director
The Wilderness Society

Peter Bahls
Executive Director
Northwest Watershed Institute

Charlie Clark
Director of Impact
MiiR

Jack Guinn
Owner
Hellbent Brewing Company

Haley Keller
Co-Owner, Finance & Retail Operations
Peddler Brewing Company

Kelsey, Ben, Liz and Craig Curran
Owners
Watershed Pub & Kitchen

Marlies Wierenga
PNW Conservation Manager
WildEarth Guardians

Wendy D. McDermott
Director, Rivers of Puget Sound-Columbia Basin
American Rivers

Roy Mclaughlin
Head Brewer
Big Time Brewing

Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

Craig Nobley
General Manager/Partner
Lighthouse Roasters

Amy Brockhaus
Deputy Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Greg Haller
Conservation Director
Pacific Rivers

Rob Smith
Northwest Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Raymond Kwan & Barry Chan
Owners
Lucky Envelope Brewing

Kim McDonald
Founder
Fish Not Gold

Lara Zahaba
Co-Owner | Marketing & Communications
Stoup Brewing

Kathleen S. Gobush, PhD
Director, Northwest Program
Defenders of Wildlife

Yvonne Kraus
Executive Director
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Mark Burr
General Manager
Jellyfish Brewing Company

Connie Gallant
Representative
Latinos for Wild Olympics

Patricia Jones
Executive Director
Olympic Forest Coalition