



April 12, 2021

The Honorable Christine Rolfes, Senate Ways & Means Chair
The Honorable June Robinson, Senate Ways & Means Vice Chair, Operating
The Honorable Lynda Wilson, Senate Ways & Means Ranking Member
The Honorable Sharon Brown, Senate Ways & Means Assistant Ranking Member, Operating
The Honorable Timm Ormsby, House Appropriations Chair
The Honorable Steve Bergquist, House Appropriations Vice Chair
The Honorable Mia Gregerson, House Appropriations Vice Chair
The Honorable Nicole Macri, House Appropriations Vice Chair
The Honorable Drew Stokesbary, House Appropriations Ranking Member
The Honorable Kelly Chambers, House Appropriations Assistant Ranking Member
The Honorable Chris Corry, House Appropriations Assistant Ranking Member
The Honorable Drew MacEwen, House Appropriations Assistant Ranking Member

Re: Requesting operating budget support for No Child Left Inside grant program

Dear Budget Leaders:

On behalf of the 75 undersigned organizations¹, the No Child Left Inside Coalition is writing to thank you for your strong support for connecting youth to nature through outdoor educational programs in your respective operating budget proposals. As we work together to recover from the COVID pandemic, funding for this program would provide critical opportunities for primarily underserved youth across the state to come together, reconnect, and experience the healing powers of nature. **We specifically request your support for the No Child Left Inside grant program at the \$4.5 million level as you work toward a final operating budget.**

Revitalized in 2015 by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation, No Child Left Inside is now a signature program that connects underserved youth and families to the outdoors across the state. Since 2015, the program has served more than 50,000 youth, creating an incredible legacy of learning and connection with nature, and has been replicated in other states including California, Minnesota, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Nevada. In Washington, the program has served a wide diversity of populations based on geography, socioeconomics, race, ethnicity, and ability across the state and the public funding has been matched by private funds dollar for dollar. In the 2019-2021 grant cycle, the Recreation and Conservation Office received over \$8 million in grant applications for \$1.5 million in available funds; in 2021-23, the program has received nearly \$7 million in grant

¹ Note: This letter was sent to budget leaders on April 12, 2021 with 70 signatories. By April 16, 5 additional signatories were included in the final letter.

requests. This demand demonstrates the need across Washington and showcases the public's interest and engagement in this popular program.

The 2021-23 operating budget proposals currently include an additional \$4.5 million in the Senate budget and \$500,000 in the House budget for No Child Left Inside, funded through Washington State Parks (the grant program is administered through the Recreation and Conservation Office). **We respectfully request that you fund No Child Left Inside at the Senate's proposed level, providing an additional \$4.5 million in your final operating budget, which would provide a total of \$6 million in funding for the program for the next biennium.** Funding No Child Left Inside at this level would allow the program to serve more than 85 percent of current grant applications, providing transformational experiences to more than 153,000 youth across Washington and facilitating nearly 8,000,000 hours of much-needed outdoor activity. In addition, the state grant dollars would be matched by more than \$8.6 million in outside funding. On average, 61 percent of youth benefitting from this year's grant applicants are eligible for free and reduced lunch, 53 percent are youth of color, and 19 percent are youth with disabilities. These programs serve rural and urban communities across the state and provide immeasurable benefits that are needed now more than ever.

With your help, we can provide more children with the opportunities to connect to nature and make a critical contribution to the state's recovery from the pandemic. The No Child Left Inside grant program can open access to outdoor educational programming that can change lives for tens of thousands of Washington's youth. We know that these kinds of programs improve test scores and can ignite a life-long connection to the environment.

Please make a sound and smart investment for the future of Washington's children by increasing the state's investment in No Child Left Inside. This is a down payment for the future leaders, innovators, and advocates of our communities across the state. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to connecting children to Washington's great outdoors.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Griffin-Bugert, Executive Director
Wenatchee River Institute

Shelley Allen, Finance Manager
Peak 7 Adventures

Jon Luther, Development and Programs
Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center

Stacey Hinden, Executive Director
Vashon Wilderness Program

John Hayes, Director
Mount Rainier Institute
University of Washington

Paris McClusky, Executive Director
South Sound Estuary Association (SSEA): DBA,
Puget Sound Estuarium

Kitty Craig, Urban to Wild Director
The Wilderness Society

Jordan Lee, Physical Education Teacher
Mount Vernon Parks Foundation

Marc Heisterkamp, Executive Director
Northwest Outward Bound School

Kayla Luft, Education Manager
Friends of North Creek Forest

Joy Stewart, Executive Director
Save Habitat and Diversity of Wetlands
(S.H.A.D.O.W.)

Elise Hirschi
Development & Communications Specialist
Bike Works Seattle

Amy Eberling, Director
The Salish Sea School

Rebecca Ryan, Education Director
Wenatchee River Institute

Sarah Doyle, Program and Partnership Manager
North Olympic Salmon Coalition

Raina Baker, Executive Director
Camp Beausite Northwest

Sibyl Maer-Fillo, Director
Washington Outdoor School

Lucas Marin, Education and Outreach
Coordinator
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

Charlie Davis, President and CEO
YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties

Jill Scheffer, President
Kittitas Environmental Education Network

Tsegaye Gebru, Executive Director
Horn Of Africa Services

Blair Cooper, VP of Development
Washington Student Cycling League

Tonya Kobluk, Development Director
STIX Diabetes Programs

Chevon Powell, Founder
Golden Bricks Events

Lorae Homme-Buck, Commissioner
Lake Spokane Parks & Recreation

Darlene Kulla, Executive Director
Camp Hope of Southwest Washington

Nancy Hunnicutt, Grant Writer
The Salvation Army of Spokane

Megan Aranow
Director of Strategic Partnerships
Big City Mountaineers

Jeanette Peters, Contracts Coordinator
Pierce County Parks

Oak Rankin, Executive Director
Glacier Peak Institute

Brent Mason, Executive Director
Foss Waterway Seaport

Amy Brockhaus, Deputy Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Ed Ewing, Executive Director
Bike Works

Janneke Petersen, Coordinator of Youth Ecology
Education through Restoration
Washington Native Plant Society

Theresa Samuelson, Executive Director
Camp Fire North Central Washington

Megan Karch, CEO
IslandWood

Keith Chambliss, Teacher/Consultant
Hood Canal School District

Yvonne Kraus, Executive Director
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Shraddha Kakshapati, Pharmacist
Nepal Seattle Hiking Organization

Betsy Robblee, Board President
Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition

Stephen Streufert, Chief Development Officer
Northwest Maritime Center

Megan Ferland, CEO
Girl Scouts of Western Washington

Katie Weiss
Philanthropy and Communications Manager
Tiny Trees Preschool

Annie Sorensen, Junior Sailing Director
Corinthian Yacht Club of Seattle

Kim Hogue, Community Schools Coordinator
Youth and Family Link

William Grove, Commissioner
Lake Spokane Parks & Recreation

Jay Henningsen, CEO
Camp Korey

Franja Bryant
WNPS State Education Committee member
Washington Native Plant Society

Bernie McKinney, Treasurer
Enumclaw Plateau Community Association

Barbara McCullough-Jones
Interim Camp Director
Kiwanis Camp Wa-Ri-Ki

Christine Mahler, Executive Director
Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition

Daniel Tollerud, Camp Director
The Salvation Army Camp Gifford

Saul Weisberg, Executive Director
North Cascades Institute

Frank Benish, Chairman
Lake Spokane Parks and Recreation District

Monica Anney, Program Coordinator
Wild Grief

Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director
Washington Trails Association

Annitra Peck, Program Director
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association

Katy Rizzuti, Education Specialist
Blue Mountain Land Trust

Sarah Menard, Education Chairperson
Northwest Motorcycle Association

Gary Cox, Owner/Vigernon
Ellensburg Canyon Winery, LLC

Bernie McKinney, Vice President
Green River Coalition

Steve Smith, Risk Management Consultant
Experiential Consulting, LLC

Tom Vogl, CEO
The Mountaineers

Ryan Griffith, Assistant Recreation Director
City of Spokane Parks and Recreation
Department

Michael Lasater, Health and Fitness Teacher
Wenatchee High School

Seth Wendzel, Experiential Education
Coordinator
Chelan County Extension 4-H

Jared Sanford, CEO
Lifeline Connections

Haley Lebsack, Non-Profit Consultant
Sustainable Consulting

Melissa Malott, Executive Director
Citizens for a Healthy Bay

Deb Crockett, Executive Director
Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)

Kenneth Perine, Pastor
Salvation Army

Sheila Wilson, Program Director
Nisqually River Foundation

Carolyn Hope, Parks, Recreation and Cultural
Services Director
City of Burien