

(Submitted online to House Appropriations Committee)

Thank you Chair Ormsby and members of the Committee, my name is Conor Marshall and I am submitting written testimony on PSHB 1198 on behalf of The Mountaineers, signed in as other.

The Mountaineers is an non-profit outdoor education and recreation organization that connects youth and adults to the outdoors through recreational activities, including on Washington's state-managed public lands.

These state parks, recreation, and wildlife areas provide both residents and visitors transformational outdoor experiences, positive health and wellness benefits, and connection to the natural world that fosters a stewardship ethic for our shared lands and waters.

At a time when federal public lands are under threat and under-resourced, as state land managers face growing backlogs of deferred maintenance, and visitation to our state lands continues to rise, it's critically important to adequately fund our three state land management agencies.

Maintaining integral investments in these agencies in the final 2025-27 operating budget will allow land managers to continue to address maintenance and operations needs on their lands, manage recreation sustainably, and protect natural and cultural resources for all.

Maintenance and Operations Funding for State Land Managers

Thank you for including \$7.5 million in ongoing maintenance and operations (M&O) funding for Washington State Parks (State Parks), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). First passed in 2022, this ongoing \$10 million M&O investment has become a significant percentage of each agency's maintenance and operations spending: 20% for State Parks, 40% for DNR, and nearly 50% for DFW.

We ask that the Committee include the full \$10 million per agency in the final House operating budget to ensure these lands can thrive and the experiences they provide can endure into the future.

Funding for State Agencies and Tribes to Study and Address Recreation Impacts

We are concerned to see the lack of inclusion of funding to support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative (STRII) in PSHB 1198. We ask that the Committee include STRII funding reflected in the proposed House operating budget – \$724,000 for State Parks and \$984,000 DFW – to continue to help fund the STRII technical work group and help develop a statewide data management system.

We are also concerned by the lack of funding for \$3.4 million in tribal capacity grants to support the engagement of Tribes in the STRII process. This funding was included in Governor Inslee's

proposed operating budget under the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and was proposed to be funded using Climate Commitment Act funding.

These resources are integral to the ongoing work between state land managers and tribes to study, measure, and mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources on state lands - the ancestral homelands of Native peoples.

Funding to Connect Underserved Youth to the Outdoors

Thank you for including \$3.375 million in funding for Washington's No Child Left Inside (NCLI) grant program, which has connected more than 154,000 underserved youth to the outdoors.. While this funding level reflects a 50% cut from the last biennium, it allows the program to continue to support the efforts of organizations like The Mountaineers to connect our state's underserved youth to transformative outdoor experiences.

Thank you for considering our support of these important funding requests to restore public lands, manage sustainable recreation, and connect underserved youth to nature in the final 2025-2027 House operating budget.