



March 28, 2025

To: Washington's D.C. Delegation

Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Congresswoman Schrier, Congresswoman Jayapal,
Congresswoman DelBene, Congressman Smith, and Congressman Newhouse

RE: Support Alliance of National Heritage Area's Request for \$33.5 million for Federal FY2025
and \$33.5 million for Federal FY2026 from the Heritage Partnership Program (HPP).

Dear Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Congresswoman Schrier, Congresswoman Jayapal,
Congresswoman DelBene, Congressman Smith, and Congressman Newhouse,

The Mountaineers strongly supports full funding for America's National Heritage Areas. The Mountaineers has firsthand experience of the positive impacts of the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area. Its impact on our community is immense and irreplaceable.

The Mountaineers, based in Seattle, Washington and founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is "to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond." The Mountaineers Books publishing division expands the mission internationally through award-winning publications including instructional guides, adventure narrative, and conservation photography.

More than 1,200 Mountaineers volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education trips and courses annually for our 16,000+ members. Our youth programs provide over 15,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside. We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors, and protects the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

The Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area is an incredibly important landscape to The Mountaineers and our community. Every day, many of our members recreate in the Greenway and enjoy the myriad of outdoor recreation activities and scenic natural beauty that the area provides. The opportunities for urban-dwelling people to connect with nature and recreate outdoors in a place like the Greenway are unparalleled.



The National Heritage Area also offers a premier, and accessible, area for our volunteer leaders to teach critical outdoor recreation skills for both youth and adults. Our programs teach outdoor skills in locations such as “Exit 38” climbing routes, snowshoeing at Gold Creek, cross-country skiing at Cabin Creek, hiking in the Mount Si Natural Resource Conservation Area, navigation exercises on Tiger Mountain, and alpine climbing at Snoqualmie Pass. The Mountaineers has also been a committed partner of the Greenway Trust in improving and maintaining recreational trails and building public support, understanding, and awareness of trail and recreation stewardship in the Greenway for more than a decade.

The Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area has helped us meet rising demand for outdoor education, and provided an outdoor classroom so that we can teach responsible and sustainable recreation courses. **We support the Alliance of National Heritage Area’s request for \$33.5 million for Federal FY2025 and \$33.5 million for Federal FY2026 from the Heritage Partnership Program because, without this funding, the future of educational and recreation programming, and continued access to natural and cultural resources in this rapidly growing region, is at risk.**

The work of NHAs is efficient, effective and essential. One study found that NHAs were responsible for a nearly \$13 billion economic impact in the communities they serve. The 62 NHAs across the country are known for their unique public-private partnerships and ability to leverage federal dollars with non-federal contributions. In the Greenway NHA, the NHA average is exceeded, and every federal dollar is leveraged with \$4 in non-federal contributions.

As you can imagine, NHAs have been faced with funding uncertainty since January 2025, and now NHAs face the reality of inadequate appropriations for our future operations. There are more NHA’s now than ever before, and federal funding for NHAs has not increased along with the increased number of NHAs designated across the country. In fact, in real dollars, NHAs receive half of the funding they did 20 years ago.

To ensure that National Heritage Areas like the Greenway NHA can continue their vital work, we support the request for a modest \$33.5 million in total annual funding for each of FY 2025 and FY 2026. This is only a slight increase from current levels, and will ensure each NHA, including the Mountains to Sound Greenway NHA, receives approximately \$500,000 in federal funding – a small investment given what they provide to communities like mine.

During a time of increased scrutiny over federal spending, I encourage you to work with your colleagues to ensure that NHAs receive the funding they need to celebrate what makes America special. Please support \$33.5 million in total funding in FY2025 and FY2026 from the Heritage Partnership Program for National Heritage Areas.



THE
MOUNTAINEERS

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Sincerely,

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