



September 10, 2025

The Honorable Kim Schrier  
 United States House of Representatives  
 1110 Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Cosponsorship of H.R. 3930, the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2025**

Dear Representative Schrier:

The 60 undersigned local elected officials, local businesses leaders and conservation, recreation and wildlife stakeholders serving your district thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 3930, the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2025. This legislation, introduced by Senator Maria Cantwell and Representative Andres Salinas, would provide permanent legislative protections for the 24-year-old National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brook Rollins has initiated the process for an administrative repeal of these important protections for our remaining unlogged old growth forests, sources of clean and safe drinking water, critical wildlife habitat and popular recreation opportunities for families.

We appreciate your action to cosponsor identical legislation in previous Congresses (H.R. 279 in 2021 and H.R. 2491 in 2019). Thank you for joining the eight other members of the Washington Congressional delegation who have already cosponsored H.R. 3930.

**Continued Attacks on Our Federal Public Lands**

We appreciate your past and consistent support for our federal lands by signing onto letters opposing the indiscriminate and mass firing of employees in federal land management agencies like the U.S. Forest Service. We also appreciate you being part of the bipartisan opposition to efforts in the Budget Reconciliation bill to sell off up to 250 million acres of federal lands to private interests. Collectively, we were successful in removing a provision that would have allowed up to 5 million acres of U.S. Forest Service land and 340,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land to be privatized in Washington State alone.

The biggest component of the lands targeted in the repealed public lands sell off provision were national forest roadless areas (totaling two million acres in Washington State). The recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to repeal the Roadless Rule is the next attack on these same federal public lands. We need you to continue to stand up for our public lands now more than ever.

**The National Forest Roadless Rule**

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule is a popular and balanced policy that protects nearly 60 million acres of undeveloped national forests from road-building and other industrial activity. Initially the concept was brought up in Congress by fiscal conservatives who recognized the maintenance backlog on the largely important, but unaffordable, 370,000-mile road system on Forest Service lands. They raised the point that if

we cannot pay for the forest roads we already have, then why would we build additional costly roads in the few areas of our national forest that do not have them.

After an extensive two-year public process, including 600 public meetings nationwide (and 28 throughout Washington State) as well as 1.6 million public comments (95% of which were in support of the Rule) the rule was finalized in January of 2001.

Roadless areas are among the most important areas on our national forests:

- 60 million Americans rely on clean and safe drinking water from National Forests. Roadless areas provide the purest source of water due to their pristine and road-free condition.
- Outdoor recreation is the largest single use of National Forest lands, and USFS in Washington State maintains nearly 12,000 miles of trails and field over 7 million visits per year (much of this in roadless areas). Nearly \$1 billion is spent annually in communities around the National Forests in Washington, benefiting local businesses as an economic driver of the region. Popular recreation trails like the Mount Dickerman Trail (Snohomish County), Boardman Lake Trail (Snohomish County), Icicle Creek Ridge (Chelan County), Thorpe Lake Trail (Kittitas County), Standup Creek Trail (Kittitas County), and Jolly Mountain via Sasse Ridge (Kittitas County) are located within roadless areas in your district.
- A majority of the unspoiled habitat for hundreds of threatened, endangered, and declining species is found in Roadless areas. In Washington, 25 at-risk species, including bald eagles, steelhead and bull trout, and Chinook salmon are found in National Forests and could be harmed by the building of new roads and the ensuing destruction of Roadless areas.
- The majority of our remaining unlogged old-growth forests on national forest lands in Washington State are in inventoried roadless areas.

## **A Commonsense Approach**

The existing roadless rule is a balanced policy that prohibits new road construction in about a third of the national forest system. It contains no direct prohibitions on mining or recreation (including off-road vehicle use). Common sense exceptions exist as part of the rule for temporary or other actions relating to road building for wildfire response, public health and safety, cleaning up toxic waste, existing mineral leases, federal highway projects, ecosystem restoration and habitat protection.

As mentioned above, the roadless rule allows for exceptions for activities related to wildfire suppression and response. However, several studies have found that forests in roadless areas are: (1) less prone to fire risk due to the lack of road access (highly correlated to human-caused fire starts); (2) are generally not in close proximity to life and property; (3) and, generally have more complex and resilient stand structure due to the lack of regeneration harvest and replanting.

For example, a recent analysis of the InFORM Fire Occurrence Data Records [Dataset] (2024) from the National Interagency Fire Center found that building roads into roadless areas is likely to result in more fires. From 1992 to 2024, in all 8 contiguous-US Forest Service regions combined, wildfire-ignition density was lowest in designated wilderness areas (1.7 fires/ 2,500 acres), followed closely by that in Inventoried Roadless Areas (1.9 fires/2,500 acres). The highest wildfire-ignition density was in lands within 50 meters of roads (7.4 fires/2,500 acres).<sup>i</sup>

Efforts to repeal these important administrative protections have occurred in the past at least three times (the most recent of which was four years ago). Thank you for your support for protecting these important public lands in perpetuity by cosponsoring H.R. 3930.

Sincerely,

Lisa Callan  
State Representative, 5th Legislative District  
Washington House of Representatives

Zach Hall  
State Representative, 5th Legislative District  
Washington House of Representatives

Janice Zahn  
State Representative, 41st Legislative District  
Washington House of Representatives

Sarah Perry  
Councilmember, District 3  
King County Council

Teresa Mosqueda  
Councilmember District 8  
King County Council

Ryan N. Mello  
Executive  
Pierce County

Dave Somers  
County Executive  
Snohomish County

Megan Dunn  
Councilmember, District 2  
Snohomish County Council

Leisha Nobach  
Councilmember, Position #2  
City of Arlington

Kate Baldwin  
Councilmember  
City of Auburn

Tamie Deady  
Councilmember Position #1  
City of Black Diamond

Steven Cook  
Councilmember  
City of Cle Elum

Sean Smith  
Mayor Pro Tem  
City of Covington

Amy Ockerlander  
Mayor  
City of Duvall

Adam Olen  
Councilmember  
City of Duvall

Nancy Lillquist  
Council Member, Position 1  
City of Ellensburg

Steven Yarbrough  
Mayor  
City of Gold Bar

Chuck Lie  
Council Position 4  
City of Gold Bar

Norm Johnson  
Mayor  
Town of Index

Alysse Hotz  
Council Member  
Town of Index

Jessie Soper  
Council Member  
Town of Index

John Jackson  
Council Member  
Town of Index

Scott MacDonald  
Council Member  
Town of Index

Bert Shepardson  
Council Member  
Town of Index

Mary Lou Pauly  
Mayor  
City of Issaquah

Barbara de Michele  
Deputy Council President  
City of Issaquah

Kelly Jiang  
City Councilmember  
City of Issaquah

Carl Florea  
Mayor  
City of Leavenworth

Zeke Reister  
Council Member, Position #2  
City of Leavenworth

Christina (Chris) Rustik  
City Council Position #1  
City of North Bend

Angela Birney  
Mayor  
City of Redmond

Vanessa Kritzer  
Council President  
City of Redmond

Jessica Forsythe  
Council Vice President  
City of Redmond

Melissa Stuart, MNPL  
Councilmember  
City of Redmond

Kent Treen  
Council Member  
City of Sammamish

Henry Sladek  
Mayor  
Town of Skykomish

Catherine (Cat) Cotton  
Council Member Position #5  
City of Snoqualmie

William Gerdts  
Acting President  
Three Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Issaquah)

Susan Chatlos-Susor  
President  
Friends of Heybrook Ridge (Index)

Kim Ngo  
Executive Director  
Issaquah Alps Trails Club (Issaquah)

Lance Reif  
Owner  
Wildwater River Guides (Leavenworth)

Rick McGuire  
President  
Alpine Lakes Protection Society

Mark Boyar  
President  
Middle Fork Outdoor Recreation Coalition (MidFORC)

Dan Streiffert  
Conservation Chair  
Rainier Audubon Society (Auburn)

John McGlenn  
President  
Washington Wildlife Federation

Amy Brockhaus  
Deputy Director  
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Taylor Gale  
HR & Operations Manager  
Dru Bru (Snoqualmie Pass)

David Skiba  
Head Brewer/Founder  
No Boat Brewing Co. (Snoqualmie)

Susan Ballinger  
Founder  
Wenatchee Naturalist Program (Wenatchee)

Steve Loitz  
President  
Kittitas Audubon Society (Ellensburg)

David Bouta  
Secretary  
Yakima River Headwaters Trout Unlimited  
(Ellensburg)

Sarah Shaffer  
Executive Director  
Wenatchee Outdoors (Wenatchee)

Brian G. Nelson  
President  
Wild Sky Community Trails Association (Index)

Ben Avery  
Director  
Sierra Club Washington State Chapter

Thomas O’Keefe, PhD  
Director of Policy and Science  
American Whitewater

Mia Abbett  
CEO/Owner  
München Haus (Leavenworth)

Eddie Espinosa  
Executive Director  
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

William E. Derry  
President  
Pilchuck Audubon Society (Everett)

Arthur Campbell  
President  
North Central Washington Audubon Society  
(Wenatchee)

Betsy Robblee  
Conservation & Advocacy Director  
The Mountaineers

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.wilderness.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Summary%20NFS%20roads%20fire%20paper%20-%202025.pdf>