

**American Canoe Association • American Whitewater
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance • Grayl • HEST • KAVU True Outdoor Wear
Mercantile Commerce LLC • Outdoor Alliance • Outdoor Research • Patagonia
REI Co-op • Runner Girl Races LLC • Surfrider Foundation • The Mountaineers
Washington Kayak Club • Washington Canyon Coalition • Washington Trails Association
Winter Wildlands Alliance**

December 15, 2025

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Senator Patty Murray

Representative Emily Randall
1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Outdoor Recreation Community Support for Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Dear Senator Murray and Representative Randall:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, we write to express our strong support for the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (S. 1737 and H.R. 3369). The Wild Olympics legislation would protect approximately 125,000 acres of Wilderness and 460 miles of rivers as Wild and Scenic on the Olympic Peninsula, preserving salmon streams and wild lands adjacent to Olympic National Park. In addition to its conservation values, the bill safeguards hundreds of miles of trails, scores of climbing sites, dozens of whitewater paddling destinations, and important backcountry ski terrain.

The Olympic Peninsula—with Olympic National Park and the surrounding Forest Service lands and rivers—is a cornerstone of Washington’s outdoor recreation landscape. Preserving these iconic lands and waters will strengthen our growing outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor recreation is a major economic force in Washington State, generating an estimated \$25.2 billion in spending in 2024 and supporting more than 237,000 jobs statewide.¹ Some of the greatest value comes from human-powered experiences in

¹ Koefod, C., Fletcher, A., Cousins, K., Mackey, E., & Needell, A. (2025). Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State: 2025 Update. Earth Economics, prepared for the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, Tacoma, WA

natural and wilderness settings—activities such as hiking, backpacking, paddling, and wildlife viewing that depend on intact ecosystems and high-quality public lands. When these experiences are combined with the broader ecosystem services provided by the state’s forests, rivers, mountains, and coastlines, the total annual value of Washington’s outdoor recreation assets reaches between \$53.8 billion and \$182 billion.

While most of the Olympic Peninsula’s premier mountaineering destinations lie within Olympic National Park, several summits and crags of interest are located on the Olympic National Forest outside existing Park and Wilderness boundaries. The Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act would provide lasting protection to places valued by climbers locally and around the world. Proposed additions to the Mount Skokomish Wilderness, for example, would protect scrambling and climbing objectives such as Mt. Washington, Mt. Pershing, Jefferson Peak, Mt. Ellinor, and the nearby Ellinor Towers. In the spring, Mt. Ellinor is also known as a destination for backcountry skiers.

For whitewater paddlers, the region is exceptional because the watersheds that radiate from the Olympic Mountains receive several feet of precipitation each year, creating an extraordinary concentration of runnable river miles in a relatively small geographic area. Dozens of whitewater runs pass through towering ancient forests and moss-covered gorges. These rivers also transport the sand that forms the beaches and surf breaks along the wild Washington Coast.

Because of the collaborative approach taken in the bill’s development—including input from local and national mountain biking stakeholders—the legislation also enjoys broad support from the mountain biking community. We particularly appreciate that the bill designates Wilderness while also applying other protective designations where appropriate. The mountain biking loop trail along the Dungeness River passes through ancient forests and along the banks of a wild river. By including this trail within the Wild and Scenic River corridor but outside of the proposed Wilderness, the bill protects and enhances the mountain biking experience while upholding conservation values.

Special wild places form the foundation of our outdoor economy, and we applaud your leadership in protecting the lands and rivers in the Wild Olympics proposal. We stand ready to help move this initiative across the finish line. Together, we can ensure that the outdoor recreation economy—and the companies that depend on it—continues to thrive in Washington.

Sincerely,

Brett Mayer, Policy Director, American Canoe Association

Thomas O'Keefe, Director of Policy and Science, American Whitewater

Eddie Espinosa, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Travis Merrigan, Co-Founder, Grayl

MJ Carroll, Brand Director, HEST

Barry Barr, CEO & Founder, KAVU True Outdoor Wear

Meghan Kearns, Founder, Mercantile Commerce LLC

Louis Geltman, Vice President for Policy and Government Relations, Outdoor Alliance

Dan Mayers, Marketing and Communications Manager, Outdoor Research

Keith Shattenkirk, Program Officer, Healthy Lands & Waters, Patagonia

Alicia Harvie, Community & Government Affairs, REI Co-op

Krissy Moehl, Owner Operator, Runner Girl Races LLC

Zach Plopper, Sr. Environmental Director, Surfrider Foundation

Betsy Robblee, Conservation & Advocacy Director, The Mountaineers

Robert Menard, Acting President, Washington Kayak Club

Amy Kolor, Advocacy & Stewardship Chair, Washington Canyon Coalition

Michael DeCramer, Policy and Planning Manager, Washington Trails Association

Anneka Williams, Policy Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance