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March 23, 2026

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

Dear Senator Murray,

On behalf of The Mountaineers and our 17,000 members, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the City of North Bend's funding request for Project Belay to establish a state-of-the-art mountain training center in North Bend.

For more than two years, The Mountaineers has been working closely with the City of North Bend, Seattle Mountain Rescue and other individuals and organizations to create the vision for Project Belay, a state-of-the-art outdoor and mountain training center in North Bend. Our vision is for a regional training center that would serve the broader outdoor community in Western Washington, equipping people with the skills and ethics to be safe, responsible recreationists.

Project Belay is envisioned to support training and skill development for individuals and organizations, including search and rescue volunteers, youth-serving organizations and outdoor education and conservation organizations such as The Mountaineers – just to name a few. The mission of The Mountaineers is to help people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. As it becomes more difficult in the future to find places to teach outdoor skills, training centers like Project Belay will be essential to fulfill our mission and will provide broad benefit to the outdoor community in Washington State.

Funding for the next phase of pre-design and design of Project Belay will be a critically important next step in making our vision a reality. We are grateful for your consideration of the City of North Bend's funding request for Project Belay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Vogl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Vogl  
CEO - The Mountaineers