



February 20, 2017

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Energy and Natural Resources  
U.S. Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Cantwell,

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 narratives, and conservation photography. 1,800 skilled volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education courses and activities annually for 15,500 members and guests. Our youth programs provide over 6,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside. We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors, protecting the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

Like many other outdoor organizations, The Mountaineers celebrated the 100th birthday of the National Park Service (NPS), which oversees 410 natural and cultural areas in all 50 states and most U.S. territories. At our first annual fundraising breakfast this past May, Chip Jenkins, Deputy Regional Director of the National Parks Service highlighted efforts underway to make our public lands more accessible to all people, especially programs that reach kids in communities that are increasingly diverse. Some of the places most frequented by our membership, both for outings and courses in Washington State are managed by the NPS. We also published the only book on the Centennial, which you were able to share at your office in DC. In short, The Mountaineers cares deeply about our national parks.

Unfortunately, as you know, the NPS faces a growing challenge in adequately maintaining its sites to ensure that visitors can experience the parks’ natural beauty and recreational amenities. After years of underfunding, NPS has an infrastructure repair backlog estimated at \$11.9 billion (FY 2015). This includes vital repairs to aging historical structures and thousands of miles of roads and trails, bridges, tunnels, sewers, drainage, and vital infrastructure.

To reduce the infrastructure repair backlog and put our national parks on sound financial footing for the future, we encourage you to take actions that would adequately fund parks and trails in the coming years. There are some specific solutions to help solve this problem:

- Create a guaranteed federal fund that will gradually reduce the estimated \$11.9 billion backlog.
- Direct more Highway Trust Fund dollars to land management agencies, including the National Park Service. Our agencies are currently unable to afford their roads that provide the public with critical access to public lands. Half of the estimated \$11.9 billion backlog is attributed to the 10,000 miles of roads and hundreds of bridges and tunnels that NPS must maintain and repair.



- Provide additional opportunities for public-private opportunities to address infrastructure repair.

From Olympic National Park to the North Cascades, our national parks are gateways to the outdoors. We need to ensure that our children and grandchildren can enjoy these wild places. We appreciate the leadership you continue to show in defending our public lands, and were heartened by your questions and comments at the hearing for the incoming Department of Interior.

As we move forward, we look forward to working with you to reduce the maintenance backlog and guarantee that our heritage and can be celebrated and enjoyed forever. Please look to us as partners and a resource in working on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Katherine Hollis,  
Conservation and Advocacy Director



February 20, 2017

Congresswoman Suzan DelBene  
2442 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman DelBene,

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We appreciate the leadership you continue to show in defending our public lands, and we look forward to working with you to reduce the maintenance backlog and guarantee that our heritage and can be celebrated and enjoyed forever. Please look to us as partners and a resource in working on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Katherine Hollis,  
Conservation and Advocacy Director



February 20, 2017

Congressman Derek Kilmer  
1520 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer,

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The  
Mountaineers

7700 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Katherine Hollis'.

Katherine Hollis,  
Conservation and Advocacy Director