

# **BIG TENT** OUTDOOR RECREATION COALITION



August 5, 2015

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

We in the Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition and the outdoor recreation community are deeply appreciative for a number of landmark investments in Washington's outdoor recreation economy in the 2015 Sessions. Last year, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation outlined an ambitious agenda for promoting outdoor recreation in the state of Washington. Through your visionary leadership in partnership with legislative leaders, policymakers rose to the occasion. The next step is selecting a strong candidate for the outdoor recreation sector senior adviser, and we would like to provide our input on the qualities that such a person should possess.

**Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition**  
**info@bigtentcoalition.info | 120 State Avenue NE #303, Olympia WA, 98501 | (360) 867-8840**

But we first wish to acknowledge this session's significant investments in critical outdoor recreation programs like Youth Athletic Facilities, No Child Left Inside, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Boating Facilities, the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), the Non-Highway Off-Road Vehicle Account (NOVA), and others. We also saw significant steps forward on the policy front, including passage of marine tourism legislation, continued Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) flexibility for local governments, and removal of the gas tax cap applicable to off-road recreation. And we're excited that Washington will become only the third state in the country with a dedicated senior adviser focused exclusively on the outdoor recreation sector.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this suite of policies and investments are a game-changer for Washington. Outdoor recreation offers a range of very real benefits—helping improve education outcomes, boosting health and extending life expectancy, rehabilitation for the military community, and many others. But it does more than just maintain and promote quality of life and good public health. The state's own research demonstrates the outsize impact the industry has on our ongoing prosperity. Nearly 200,000 people go to work every day thanks to the \$21.6 billion that Washingtonians and out-of-state visitors spend on camping, hiking, boating, hunting, fishing and a wide variety of other great outdoor activities. This economic engine is responsible for \$4 billion every budget cycle in local and state revenues, more than paying for investments in our great outdoors.

It is precisely because of the significance of this industry that we think the upcoming hire of an outdoor recreation sector lead in the Governor's office is so important. Outdoor recreation is unique in that the key to its future growth and success will come not simply from attracting companies to relocate to Washington, but from growing outdoor recreation participation, businesses, spaces and activities within the state.

Making sure that this person understands and brings passion to this unique and complex field will be critical for ensuring the success of this position in expanding participation in outdoor recreation and growing this vital industry in the coming years. We would respectfully ask that you consider a number of factors as you evaluate potential candidates for the position:

- **A breadth of outdoor recreation experience:** Unlike other major Washington industries, outdoor recreation has a tremendous variety of activities that contribute to its overall impact. Washingtonians engage with our outdoors in a variety of ways—hunting, fishing, camping, skiing, boating, hiking, horseback riding and others. The sector lead should be fluent in the broad range of activities our state is known for and should be a relentless and unabashed advocate for outdoor recreation.
- **Pacific Northwest roots:** Our corner of the country is unique, and the sector lead should know and appreciate the outdoor recreation culture we have in the Pacific Northwest.
- **Familiarity with the rich geographic diversity of Washington:** Unlike other major industries, outdoor recreation is an economic engine that benefits every corner of Washington, most especially the small gateway communities adjacent to our natural treasures. It is absolutely critical that the sector lead knows and appreciates how the industry fits into all parts of Washington—from the Puget Sound to the Columbia River to the Blue Mountains.
- **Experience in both public and private sector:** Outdoor recreation, to a greater degree than most other industries, is a true partnership between federal, state and local governments and private industry. Much of the outdoor recreation spaces we know and love are publically owned and funded.

But the tools of the craft are generally made possible by private business, large and small. The outdoor recreation sector lead should understand both sides of this partnership.

- **Experience with programs that engage young people:** Participating in outdoor recreation helps young people stay healthy and active and can help them succeed in school. The Legislature recognized this by re-investing in the No Child Left Inside grant program. The recreation sector lead should be able to develop and implement strategies to help young people engage in outdoor recreation.
- **Experience in economic development and tourism:** We need an experienced expert in economic development and especially tourism that recognizes that outdoor recreation is a major draw for both visitors and transplants.
- **A bi-partisan approach:** Outdoor recreation is a force regardless of location or partisan affiliation. We believe the person brought in to grow and add jobs to the outdoor recreation sector should be equally at ease working with either political party in the Legislature.

We are confident that you will make a strong selection to advise and direct Washington state policy on outdoor recreation, and we're excited to partner with your choice to grow this sector in the coming years.

As members of the Big Tent Coalition and the outdoor recreation community, we offer our assistance to you in evaluating and making the choice of who will serve as our state's very first outdoor recreation sector lead. It is a critical decision and we stand ready to partner with your office however we can be most helpful.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Yours in partnership,



Doug Levy, President  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
WA Recreation and Park Assoc.  
Recreational Boating Assoc. of WA



Marc Berejka, Vice President  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
REI



John Keates, Treasurer  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
City of Bothell Parks



Andrea Imler, Secretary  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
Washington Trails Assoc.



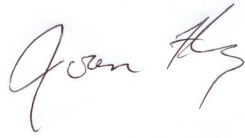
John Gifford  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Assoc.



Linda Driscoll  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
Premier Polaris



Vladimir Gutman  
Big Tent Board of Directors  
Wildlife and Recreation Coalition



Joan Fleming  
Back Country Horsemen of WA



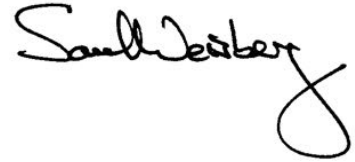
Jim Goldsmith  
Washingtonians for Wildlife  
Conservation



Ben Klasky  
President and CEO  
Islandwood



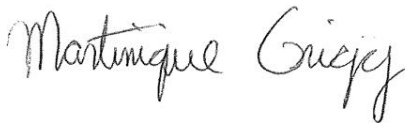
Stephen Streufert  
Pacific Northwest Director  
NatureBridge



Saul Weisberg  
Executive Director  
North Cascades Institute



Mitsu Iwasaki  
Executive Director  
NW Outward Bound



Martinique Grigg  
Executive Director  
The Mountaineers



Benjamin Greuel  
Washington State Director  
The Wilderness Society



Oak Rankin  
Glacier Peak Institute



Joshua Brandon  
Military/Veterans Program Manager  
Project Rebirth



Mo McBroom  
Director, Government Relations  
The Nature Conservancy



Paul Kundtz  
Washington State Director  
The Trust for Public Land