

#FixOurParks

September 28, 2018

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Congressman Rick Larsen
2113 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler
1107 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Dan Newhouse
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
1314 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Derek Kilmer
1520 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal
319 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman David Reichert
1127 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Adam Smith
2264 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Denny Heck
425 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Washington State Congressional Delegation,

The following groups from Washington write in support of the *Restore Our Parks Act* (S. 3172) and its similar companion bill the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act* (H.R. 6510), which would direct robust and dependable multi-year funding to help address the multi-billion maintenance backlog facing our National Park System.

Our country's national park sites contain some of America's greatest natural and cultural treasures, and it's no surprise that they have become beloved recreation and vacation destinations each year for hundreds of millions of Americans and international visitors.

By investing in our parks, Congress invests in our local economies. National park visitation generated \$36 billion for the U.S. economy in 2017 and supported 306,000 jobs. In Washington, restoring our parks would create infrastructure-related jobs, preserve our nation's heritage for future generations, and help local communities that depend on park tourism and recreation.

Outdoor recreation is a vibrant part of Washington's culture and economy. The outdoor recreation economy in Washington generated 201,000 jobs, \$26.2 billion in consumer spending, and \$2.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. Many of these visits are to the state's many national parks.

In 2017, over 8 million visitors enjoyed national parks in Washington. From Fort Vancouver to Olympic National Park, Washington benefited from \$507.8 million spent in gateway communities. That spending supported 6,538 jobs and added a cumulative benefit of \$676.8 million to the state economy –money that helps businesses, schools, and families. Despite the importance of national parks to Washington's economy, they need more than \$398 million in repairs. To keep national parks in Washington strong and vibrant, and to capture the benefits they provide to the state, restoration must be a priority.

Sadly, a combination of aging infrastructure, visitation pressures, and a history of inconsistent funding has led to an estimated \$11.6 billion backlog of deferred maintenance. Repair projects include crumbling roads and bridges, rotting historic buildings, impassable hiking trails, and deteriorating electrical, water, and sewage systems. If left unaddressed, these repair needs can threaten visitor access and safety.

Our national parks need and deserve an increase in federal resources to support our visitors, recreation, businesses and the natural and cultural resources that make them special. Congress has long-standing commitments to fund our public lands, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which need to be addressed. Funding needs for the NPS deferred maintenance backlog and the Land and Water Conservation Fund can and should be resolved in a potential end-of-the-year lands package that moves forward. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of these measures.

Sincerely,

National Parks Conservation Association

Rob Smith, Northwest Regional Director

Northwest Youth Corps

Jay Satz, Senior Director, Partnerships & Innovation

Washington Wild

Tom Uniack, Executive Director

Washington's National Park Fund

Laurie Ward, Executive Director

Recreation Northwest

April Claxton, co-Executive Director

North Cascades Institute

Saul Weisberg, Executive Director

Olympic Park Associates

Donna Osseward, President

REI

Taldi Walter, Community & Government Affairs Manager

Visit Rainier

Meilee Anderson, Marketing Consultant

Washington Trails Association

Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director

Conservation Northwest

Dave Wertz, Science & Conservation Director

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Jon Hoekstra, Executive Director

Skagit Audubon Society
Tim Manns, Conservation Chair

Sierra Club, Washington Chapter
Harry Romberg, National Forest Committee
Chair

Vet Voice Foundation
Maj. Gen. (Ret) Paul Eaton, Managing Director

Emerald Water Anglers
Dave McCoy, Owner

Washington Hometown
Jennifer Hackett, Founder

Olympic Forest Coalition
Connie Gallant, President

North Cascades Conservation Council
Tom Hammond, President

Washington Bed & Breakfast Guild
Julie McAferty, President

The Mission Continues
Doug Pfeffer, Executive Director – West
Region

Mountain Gear, Inc.
Paul Fish, President

**Washington State Building and
Construction Trades Council**
Mark L. Riker, Executive Secretary

Washington Tourism Alliance
David Blandford and Shiloh Burgess, Co-
Chairs

**SMART Union Transportation
Division/United Transportation Union**
Herb Krohn, Washington State Director &
Legislative Board

The Lands Council
Mike Petersen, Executive Director

Hilleberg the Tentmaker
Petra Hilleberg, President

Washington Council of Trout Unlimited
Brad Throssell, State Chair

Dave McCoy Photography
Dave McCoy, Owner

Hiatt Studios
Ellen Hiatt & Brent Garner, Owners

Cascades Forest Conservancy
Nicole Budine, Policy & Campaign Manager

The Mountaineers
Katherine Hollis, Conservation & Advocacy
Director

Washington Wildlife Federation
Jen Syrowitz, Executive Director

**Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Polly
Dyer Chapter**
Annie Cubberly, Broad Band Leader

**Puget Sound Chapter, National Electrical
Contractors Association**
Barry Sherman, Executive Director

Visit Seattle
Tom Norwalk, President & CEO

Outdoor Research
Dan Nordstrom, CEO

Association of Northwest Steelheaders
Bob Rees, Executive Director

Northwest Guides and Anglers Association
Grant Putnam, President

Olympic Hiking Co.
Tommy Farris, Jr.

Sky Valley Chamber of Commerce
Debbie Copple, Director

Washington Hospitality Association
Morgan Hickel, State Government Affairs

**Greater Seattle Business Association
(GSBA)**
Louise Chernin, President & CEO

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation
Chris Moore, Executive Director