

Sept. 19, 2019

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

RE: *Strong support for including \$50,000 in FY 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget to update “Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State” released in January 2015*

Dear Governor Inslee:

We write as individual organizations and through the Big Tent Coalition for Outdoor Recreation, respectfully asking you to include a modest \$50,000 allocation in your 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget to update an economic analysis that is vital to helping the public understand the incredible benefits of the outdoor recreation sector.

Because outdoor recreation activities – and the businesses that support them – are diffuse and spread throughout our state, most residents, opinion leaders, and policy-makers had been relatively unaware of their combined importance to the State of Washington. That began to change in January 2015, when the “Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State” directed by the Legislature and commissioned by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) detailed the staggering economic benefits that accrue to our state as a result of outdoor recreation activities.

The study by Earth Economics showed that the average Washington spends 56 days a year recreating outdoors, leading to \$21.6 billion a year in overall economic activity, \$12.5 billion in direct sales, and \$4.7 billion in household wages. The study further detailed that the number of jobs in the outdoor recreation sector (just under 200,000) outpaced the information technology sector (191,000 at the time) and more than doubled the figure for aerospace (94,000 at the time).

As crucial as that study was, it is now time for it to be refreshed and updated. The “Economic Analysis” provided objective and data-driven information to help you and the Legislature make fiscal and policy decisions impacting the outdoor recreation sector. It also helped decision-makers gain a new level of appreciation for the multiple benefits provided by outdoor recreation – not only in terms of economic value, but for public health and the environment as well.

Because the 2015 study and the metrics that underlie it have already been completed, it is our understanding that an update of this study can be done for about \$50,000. From our perspective, that is a very small price to pay for the overwhelming value of keeping outdoor recreation economic data current and in real-time for your office, the Legislature, and the public at-large.

We respectfully ask you to update the Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State” by including \$50,000 in your 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget. Thank you for your strong support of outdoor recreation and the health, economic, and environmental benefits it provides to Washingtonians.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our request.

Supported by the Following Outdoor Recreation Organizations:

Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition

Washington Recreation and Park Association

Recreational Boating Association of Washington

Recreation Northwest

The Mountaineers

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Northwest Marine Trade Association

Washington Bikes

American Whitewater

Washington Trails Association

Washington State Parks Foundation

Bainbridge Island Metro Park & Recreation District