

Chair Jeff Merkley

Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

October 15, 2024

**Re: Forest Service Parity in Field Unit Local Hiring (Sec. 125)**

Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski,

On behalf of the millions of trail users we represent and as organizations that cooperatively manage the National Trails System trails, we thank the Committee for advancing legislation to fund our nation's trails and public lands to ensure they are open and accessible for all.

We greatly appreciate the inclusion of Sec. 125, Field Unit Local Hiring, to address the authority of the Department of the Interior for direct hiring authority for Local Field Units. We request that this authority be extended to the USDA Forest Service. As the nation's other main land management agency, the Forest Service is facing the same hiring challenges as the Department of the Interior and should be provided the same authority under this section.

The inclusion of the USDA Forest Service is consistent with S. 5125, the *Land Manager Housing and Workforce Improvement Act*, recently introduced by Senators Barrasso, King, and Daines.

We ask for your leadership in assuring the USDA Forest Service is included in this provision in the final enacted FY25 Interior and Related Agencies bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

American Hiking Society  
American Trails  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Back Country Horsemen of America  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition  
Ice Age Trail Alliance  
The Mountaineers

Outdoor Alliance  
Pacific Crest Trail Association  
Partnership for the National Trails System  
Public Lands Alliance  
Washington Trails Association