

October 2, 2019

Dear Friend:

Oregon's 110,994 miles of rivers and streams are an invaluable part of Oregon's livability and an irreplaceable resource that must remain intact for future generations. Our rivers provide clean drinking water to millions of Oregonians, sustain our thriving outdoor recreation economy, nurture the salmon and steelhead that fuel our important commercial and recreational fishing industries, and help maintain the quality of life that brings new investments, businesses, and jobs to our state.

Oregon's outdoor recreation industry is an economic engine in Oregon. According to the Outdoor Recreation Industry, it supports 172,000 jobs and generates \$16.4 billion in economic activity. Healthy rivers are a key component of the foundation for Oregon's outdoor recreation economy.

In 1988, my colleagues in the Oregon delegation and I wrote a public letter asking Oregonians to advise us on how best to overcome the then-unfortunate fact that, despite leading the country in natural resources, Oregon had only 317 miles of rivers and streams protected from damming, diversion and development in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. America's Wild and Scenic Rivers Act aims to protect and preserve the character of our nation's most important rivers while balancing recreation, habitat, and conservation. It encourages public participation in developing goals for river protection, and helps safeguard important waterways as a legacy for future generations.

Today, I am continuing that effort, though happily from a better starting point. Oregon now has 2,173 miles designated in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system -- places like the Rogue and Deschutes Rivers and many other iconic salmon and steelhead streams. I am proud of this record, but it is still a small fraction of Oregon's total river mileage.

In February, Congress established the latest Wild and Scenic Rivers in Oregon -- adding over 250 miles to the list as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. In March, Congressman Blumenauer and I held a public forum where we asked your advice for how best to further protect, conserve, and enhance the qualities that make Oregon such a great place to live.

We heard loud and clear about the need to expand protections for critical drinking water, create new opportunities for outdoor recreation opportunities, and promote the conservation of Oregon's iconic salmon and fish species. I cannot think of a better tool to accomplish these three goals than the national Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

That is why I am calling on Oregonians to help me develop new legislation to protect Oregon's

ivers. Whether you are a whitewater rafter, an angler or simply an Oregonian who believes strongly in protecting the river or stream that provides safe drinking water to your community, I want to hear from you. Now is your chance, once again, to speak up for your favorite rivers and highlight the outstanding values that make each river worthy of protection.

I will be taking nominations for additions to the national Wild and Scenic Rivers list through January 20, 2020. Please send your submissions to rivers@wyden.senate.gov.

As I wrote in 1988, Oregonians know their rivers provide more than just electricity. They are the spawning grounds of the nation's richest runs of salmon and steelhead. They provide extraordinary trout fishing and unparalleled recreation. They are the source of safe and delicious drinking water. Oregon's rivers are, most of all, an important part of our very special quality of life.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator