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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6150

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July 25, 2016

Herbert Frost  
Regional Director, Alaska Region  
National Park Service  
240 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

RE: Proposed Action for the Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Dear Mr. Frost:

On May 24, 2016, the National Park Service published a “Proposed Action for the Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan (BWSP) for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve (WRST).” The proposed action would substantively alter the management and access to WRST not only for Alaskans, but all Americans. I respectfully request a 60-day extension of the public comment period for the proposed action, which is currently scheduled to elapse on July 30, 2016.

As you are aware, the proposed action includes over 9 million acres of wilderness and an additional 1.7 million acres of backcountry. As proposed, this plan would fundamentally alter the manner in which Alaskan stakeholders—from subsistence users to park concessionaires—engage with backcountry and wilderness areas within WRST. The proposed action was released for public comment during the beginning of the summer—a time at which those Alaskans who are most likely to be impacted by the changes in the document are busiest, often within the boundaries of the WRST itself.

Alaskans deserve the time to consider each of the various components of the Proposed Action, including but not limited to: airstrip maintenance and management limitations, restrictions on snowmachine and off-road vehicle use in certain areas, as well as other items like new definitions of hunting, or limitations to campsites. These kinds of proposed changes should not be undertaken without time for substantive and thoughtful comment, a standard which is not met by a singular, 60-day comment period.

It is my hope that the National Park Service will provide Alaskans with additional time to reflect upon the changes that this proposed action will bring to WRST, and, given additional time, provide helpful insight to the Agency. I respectfully request that consistent with all relevant

rules, laws, and regulations, all due consideration be given to this request. Thank you again for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Murkowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator