

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
CONCERNING S. 2602, TO ESTABLISH THE MOUNTAINS TO SOUND GREENWAY  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON.**

**July 23, 2014**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 2602, a bill to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the State of Washington.

The Department supports the objectives of S. 2602. The Mountains to Sound Greenway area has been found to meet the National Park Service's interim criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area. However, the Department recommends that Congress pass program legislation that establishes criteria to evaluate potentially qualified National Heritage Areas and a process for the designation, funding, and administration of these areas before designating any additional new National Heritage Areas. The Department also recommends a technical amendment to provide for an official NPS map to accompany the legislation.

There are currently 49 designated national heritage areas, although there is no authority in law that guides their designation and administration as a national system. National Heritage Area Program legislation would provide a much-needed framework for evaluation of proposed national heritage areas, guiding planning and management, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and standardizing timeframes and funding for designated areas.

S. 2602 would establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area to include lands within the Yakima River basin upstream of Manastash Creek and the cities of Ellensburg, Roslyn, Cle Elum, and South Cle Elum in Kittitas County. It would also include all lands in the Snoqualmie River, Cedar River, and Lake Washington watersheds, the Puget Sound near shore watersheds within and including the cities of Seattle and Shoreline, and 22 additional cities in King County.

The proposed local coordinating entity would be the nonprofit corporation Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (Trust).

NPS review of the *Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area Feasibility Study* completed by the Trust in March 2012, found that the study did not meet the NPS *Interim National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines*. The NPS requested the Trust provide a revised statement of national importance; themes and a list of associated resources; a summary of traditions, customs, beliefs and folk life; and a boundary justification. The NPS received the Addendum from the Trust on May 27, 2014, which (1) explained that the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area is nationally important for its association with the expansion of our national transportation system and the creation of our modern timber industry; (2)

identified three themes associated with the region's national importance and their related historic and natural resources; (3) summarized the ongoing traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that interprets and celebrates the region's national importance; and (4) justified the proposed boundary in relation to the strategic assemblage of resources and opportunities for conservation, recreation and education, as well as public interest in this national heritage area designation.

The proposed Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area tells a nationally important story of how the Northern Pacific and Milwaukee railroads, and later the Sunset Highway and Interstate 90, created the final section of an historic transportation corridor that wove the Northwest into the nation's fabric, opened up trade between the United States and Asia, and led to the development of the nation's modern timber industry.

Although the Puget Sound area was part of the United States by 1950, the Cascade Range isolated the region from the rest of the nation, with little access to its abundant natural resources and sheltered deep-water ports. Chartered by President Lincoln in 1864, the Northern Pacific Railroad was constructed along a Native American pathway through the nearly impassible Snoqualmie Pass to reach Seattle 20 years later. The connection of the Eastern seaboard and Great Lakes with the farthest reaches of the continental United States reinforced the newly drawn American-Canadian border. The City of Seattle grew into a booming hub for shipbuilding and the trade of foreign goods and the region's own wealth of natural resources, opening the country's first trade routes on what we now call the Pacific Rim. Rail towns sprung up along the main lines with mill and coal towns on the spurs, while piers stretched into Puget Sound, attracting immigrant workers whose descendants live in the region today.

The Milwaukee Road crossed the Cascades in the early 1900s using pioneering tunneling and electrification techniques. The high speed electric trains of the Milwaukee Road carried Japanese silk to New York, the nation's most precious rail commodity after gold and silver bullion, but the railroad made its money carrying passengers to ski, hike, and climb at Snoqualmie Pass. The conservation ethic that developed in the region from enjoyment of the region's natural beauty is strongly held today.

Washington's modern economy is descended directly from the Northern Pacific Land Grant that was used to build the railroad. In place of public financing, the railroad received the largest federal land grant in American history. The railroad was granted 40 million acres - every other square mile of land in a checkerboard pattern up to forty miles on either side of the right-of-way. This consolidated ownership, as well as steam technology brought by the railroad, created the booming timber industry that helped rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fueled shipbuilding in World War I. Airplanes being produced for the military on a large scale for the first time were built from the region's prized spruce trees. Demand for this aircraft led William Boeing to found a company in the region in 1916 that supplies the nation's air transportation industry today.

Plantation forestry involving sustained-yield harvest and reforestation was invented in 1937 by William Weyerhaeuser, who had amassed one and a half million acres of Washington timberland. He established the first seedling industry at Snoqualmie Falls and began to manage timber across

multiple harvests, a radical idea at the time. This remains the industry standard across much of the country today.

The cultural heritage of the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area is alive in the ethnic diversity of the region's population, in the traditions, customs and celebrations, and in museums, festivals, historic sites, and interpretive trails that both residents and visitors enjoy today. Following modern-day political and land-management structures, the proposed heritage area boundaries are pragmatic, thus offering the best formula for long-term success as communities seek to manage, enhance, and interpret resources across this landscape.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you or any other members of the subcommittee may have.