

**Statement of Glenn Casamassa**  
**Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System**  
**U.S. Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture**  
**Before the**  
**Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining**  
**Concerning**  
**S. 483 Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 2018**  
**August 22, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on S. 483, the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 2018.

S. 483 would designate new and expand existing wilderness areas, potential wilderness areas, and certain rivers in the Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers. USDA supports the intent of this legislation to recognize the importance of wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers, but has some technical concerns we would like to work with the committee and the sponsors of this bill to address. My testimony pertains only to the designations proposed on the Olympic National Forest.

USDA supports designation of suitable rivers as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Of the nineteen rivers proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation in the bill, thirteen are in areas managed by the Forest Service. Two of these rivers (the Duckabush River and the Dungeness River, which is comprised of the Dungeness and Dungeness-Gray Wolf Rivers) were previously recommended for designation through the agency's land management planning process. We support adding these river segments to the System. In addition, the Department would like to work with the Committee and bill sponsor to identify potential locations for future restoration or habitat improvement work to ensure that the designations appropriately support fisheries and water quality management activities. In addition, we want to ensure that the designations are properly integrated into the system with reasonable time to develop Comprehensive River Management Plans establish detailed boundaries, and determine classifications in cooperation with the National Park Service and the interested public. USDA would like to highlight the challenges of the requirement in Section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which mandates Comprehensive River Management Plans three-years after designation, and to suggest exemption from this requirement to align with scheduled revisions of Land and Resource Management Plans.

Two of the nineteen rivers proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation in the bill (the Big Quilcene and the South Fork Calawah) were previously found through the agency's land management planning process, to be ineligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic

Rivers System because no outstandingly remarkable values could be identified. We would like to work with the subcommittee and bill sponsor to understand how the river values are outstandingly remarkable.

USDA looks forward to working with the subcommittee and bill sponsor on boundary modifications to ensure that the boundaries are crafted to best support the Agency's ability to preserve wilderness character and the public's ability to comply with wilderness regulations where they apply. Our experience is that boundaries that follow topographic features like contour lines, creeks, and ridgetops are more manageable than boundaries based on age-class differences in timber stands, which can be difficult to describe and survey. Additionally, the bill includes previously-harvested areas and roadways within "Potential Wilderness" designations. USDA will work with the subcommittee and bill sponsor to ensure adequate restoration of wilderness character in these areas prior to designation.

The Forest Service embraces its mission to steward and safeguard wilderness character in wilderness areas, and free flowing rivers with their outstandingly remarkable values. We are committed to collaborating openly with Congress, Tribes, and all members of the interested public to identify and propose appropriate parcels of land and segments of river within the National Forest System and the Olympic National Forest for designation as Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers and to manage those parcels responsibly when designated. We look forward to working with the sponsors of this bill to address the concerns outlined above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this issue, and I welcome any questions.