

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senator
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senator
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Val Hoyle
United States Representative
1620 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Wyden and Merkley, and Congresswoman Hoyle:

We are writing to you in support of increasing protections for the Wild Rogue Wilderness. Legislation has been pending in Congress for over ten years to better safeguard the Rogue River. It's time to pass that legislation - The Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act (S. 440). And in the house (last congress) - Wild Rogue Conservation and Recreation Enhancement Act: H.R. 7509.

As outfitters and guides who rely on the Rogue and other Oregon rivers for our businesses, we have a deep first-hand understanding of the importance of the river to the region, both economically and ecologically. Our businesses are built on the bedrock of clean water, a healthy environment, and fun!

The world-renowned Rogue River cuts through some of Oregon's most scenic, rugged, and wild landscapes. Nestled in the Siskiyou Mountain Range in Southern Oregon, the river is one of the state's premier recreational destinations, attracting tens of thousands of visitors every year, directly supporting the local economy.

Outdoor recreation is one of Oregon's premier economic drivers. According to a recent study by Travel Oregon, 95 percent of Oregonians participate in outdoor recreation each year, and in 2019 alone, Oregonians and out-of-state travelers spent a combined \$15.6 billion on outdoor recreation and related expenses. This translates to 224,000 jobs supported by the outdoor recreation economy. Restaurants, recreation providers, hotels, and retail are directly and indirectly supported by the economy of our great outdoors. This economic contribution is especially important in rural parts of the state, like the Rogue River region.

This is a historic opportunity to leave a lasting legacy. Permanently protecting these wild lands is ultimately about leaving some lands just as they are so that our children and grandchildren have places to enjoy and to explore, just as we do today and as so many generations have before us.

Senators Wyden and Merkley - we appreciate your many years worth of effort to advance this legislation, please make passage of this bill a priority. Congresswoman Hoyle - we strongly encourage you to help pass Wilderness protections for the Wild Rogue.

Sincerely,

Zachary Collier
Northwest Rafting Company

Hugh Hague
Noah's Wilderness Adventures

Tim Thornton
River Drifters

Will Volpert
Indigo Creek Outfitters

Kelsey Helfrich
Helfrich River Outfitters

Kory Mahr
Orange Torpedo Trips / Briggs Rogue
River Trips

Tyler Wendt
The OARS Family of Companies

Pete Wallstrom
Momentum River Expeditions

Brian Sykes
Ouzel Outfitters

Alyssa WarrenWood
Rogue Infinity Outfitters LLC

Dave Lacey
South Coast Tours

Peter and Jonah Grubb
ROW Adventures and Sea Kayak
Adventures

Kait Sampsel
Humble Heron Fly Fishing