

May 22, 2025

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

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

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Dexter
1207 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Janelle Bynum
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andrea Salinas
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Outdoor recreation support for the River Democracy Act

Dear members of the Oregon delegation,

We, the undersigned businesses, guides, recreation and tourism organizations, Oregon outdoor industry leaders, and affiliated groups, are writing to you in support of the River Democracy Act. The Oregon economy relies heavily on outdoor recreation, for which clean water, healthy river systems, and access to public lands are necessary. The addition of over 3,200 miles of Oregon rivers and streams throughout the state to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system will help protect these waterways that sustain our communities and fuel our economy. In this time of chaos and uncertainty around our public lands, it is more important than ever to establish strong, enduring protections for our state's rivers and streams.

Outdoor recreation is one of Oregon's premier economic drivers. According to a 2022 analysis, spending on outdoor recreation in Oregon exceeded \$16 billion and supported 192,000 jobs¹. This economic contribution is especially important in rural parts of the state where rivers like the Rogue, Deschutes, North Umpqua, Owyhee, John Day, Grande Ronde, Illinois, and McKenzie draw visitors each year for world-renowned recreation opportunities.

¹ Earth Economics, "Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon: 2022 Update," <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PRP/Documents/2024.07.17%20Economic%20analysis%20of%20outdoor%20recreation%20in%20OR%20-%202022%20update.pdf>.

Our industries and way of life in Oregon rely on access to the special public lands and waters that our state affords. On public lands and waters like these, we teach our children to fish and hunt; we watch migratory birds fly overhead and wildlife stop for a drink; we search every eddy, riffle, and pool for steelhead and trout; we navigate drift boats and rafts through rapids with guests from around the world. These places make our livelihoods possible, and our quality of life truly exceptional.

Oregon's beloved rivers, and the tributaries both large and small that feed them, are vital to Oregon's outdoor recreation economy, to our quality of life and the health of our communities, and to our natural heritage. For this reason and many others, we are happy to support the River Democracy Act.

Oregon's beloved rivers, and the federal agencies in charge of managing them, are facing unprecedented pressures at the national level. Even as we work to enact strong, permanent legislative protections for these waterways, it is also vital that we support the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other public employees who work to conserve these natural treasures.

Senators Wyden and Merkley, we appreciate your many years' worth of effort to advance this effort; please make passage of this bill a priority and know that we stand behind your efforts. Congressman Bentz and Congresswomen Bonamici, Hoyle, Dexter, Bynum, and Salinas, we strongly encourage you to help pass this vital legislation to protect Oregon rivers and support Oregon's booming outdoor recreation industry. And we urge you all to support federal public lands managers who safeguard these natural treasures for the benefit of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Blueback Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Corvallis
Blue Dream Wildlife River Tours, Roseburg
Central Oregon Running Klub, Bend
Clackamas River Trout Unlimited, Gladstone
Cog Wild Bicycle Tours, Bend
Dave Smith Decoys, Lebanon
Deschutes Redband Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Bend
Earthwell, Portland
Folklord, Portland
Go Wild: American Adventures, La Grande
GRAYL
Lake Creek Lodge, Camp Sherman

Leon Werdinger Photography, Joseph
Mazamas, Portland
Mecca Flat Fly Fishing Park LLC, Madras
Minam River Lodge, Wallowa County
Mountain Provisions, Ashland
OARS
Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Oregon Council Trout Unlimited
Ouzel Outfitters, Bend
Protect Our Winters, Bend
Recreation Leader, Bend
Redsides Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Springfield
River Drifters, Maupin
ROW Adventures, Eugene and Grants Pass
Sisters Trails Alliance, Sisters
South Coast Tours, Gold Beach
The Caddis Fly Angling Shop, Eugene
The Fly Fisher's Place, Sisters
The Gear Fix, Bend
Trailkeepers of Oregon
Tualatin Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Tumalo Creek Kayak and Canoe, Bend
Vamonos Outside, Bend
Wallowa Llamas, Baker City
Wanderlust Tours, Bend