

Sportsmen Support for The Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (S.1737)



December 2nd, 2025

Senator Mike Lee, Chairman
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Bruce Westerman, Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Jared Huffman, Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Lee and Heinrich and Representatives Westerman and Huffman

As hunters, anglers, guides, sportsmen's organizations, and hunting and fishing businesses and brands representing tens of thousands of members and customers who hunt and fish on the Olympic Peninsula, we strongly support the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Act because it will permanently protect critical rivers, streams and backcountry headwaters for Peninsula salmon, steelhead, elk and other fish and game - and enhance access for sportsmen.

The Wild Olympics proposal would permanently safeguard some of the last remaining healthy and intact salmon spawning habitat, backcountry headwaters and rivers on Olympic National Forest that are currently threatened by an unprecedented wave of efforts in Congress and within federal agencies to roll back safeguards for our most sensitive public lands and waters—to open them for development or sometimes even seeking to sell them outright to private interests. These threats demonstrate why only full, statutory, congressionally designated Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River protections can truly and permanently safeguard our salmon streams for the future.

The Wild Olympics bill was carefully crafted over four years through an exhaustive community outreach process on the Peninsula with extensive input from the sportsmen community. That's why this final, compromise proposal enjoys an unprecedented level of support from local and national sportsmen's organizations and industry leaders compared to similar efforts elsewhere. The final bill removes all roads from proposed wilderness areas, ensuring that Wild Olympics will not close any roads or affect road or trailhead access.

New wilderness areas proposed for Olympic National Forest will also expand the acreage open for the early-season High Buck Hunt on the Peninsula (as confirmed by WDFW) and protect remote areas important for elk calving and other game species. Wild & Scenic River designation not only protects a river's free-flowing character—it also requires federal land managers to protect and enhance river access, fishing and boating opportunities, and it attracts additional funding for restoration and recreation projects.

That's why the legislation is win-win for sportsmen: it will permanently protect our most sensitive public lands and rivers while also maintaining and enhancing sportsmen's access—without closing any roads or restricting trailhead access. And by protecting remote sensitive areas upstream it will also help protect water quality and fishing downstream.

Equally important for those of us with friends in the timber industry, the final compromise proposal was carefully designed not to impact any current timber jobs. The bill essentially simply makes permanent current Forest Service safeguards for certain remote parts of upper watersheds on Olympic National Forest that provide critical backcountry habitat, headwaters and salmon streams and some of the best hunting and fishing opportunities on Olympic Peninsula public land.

We thank you for your consideration and urge swift approval of this balanced plan to protect the future of hunting and fishing on the Olympic Peninsula.

Signed by

WA Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
WA Council of Trout Unlimited
Rep Your Water

CHEEKY
Intrepid Anglers Guide Service
Peninsula Sportsman Guide Service
WA Council of Fly Fishers International
GreyDrake
Sportsmen For Wild Olympics
Gig Harbor Fly Shop
Wild Steelhead Coalition
Moldy Chum Reel Radio
North Sound Trout Unlimited

(cc)
U.S. Senator Patty Murray
U.S. Representative Emily Randall