



National Cattlemen's
Beef Association

May 8, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) would like to take this opportunity to express our opposition to H.R. 1791, the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Act. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who hold federal grazing permits and operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

NCBA and PLC maintain our position that the Department of the Interior must dedicate all available resources toward addressing the estimated \$16 billion in deferred maintenance agency-wide before any resources should be allocated toward acquiring or re-designating any new lands. The creation of new National Heritage Areas, over the opposition of county and local governments, would tie up vital resources which could otherwise be allocated toward addressing this dire backlog. Additionally, the designation of these lands as National Heritage Areas could risk adding burdensome and costly requirements to future agricultural, land use, and grazing permit decisions.

Public lands ranchers own approximately 120 million acres of the most productive private land in the west and manage nearly 250 million acres of adjacent public land. Additionally, those ranchers do vital work that benefits public land including the improvement of water sources, improvement of wildlife habitat, and maintaining the open space that Americans enjoy.

PLC and NCBA appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Dave Eliason
President
Public Lands Council

Kevin D. Kester
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association