

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2015

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe, Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Boxer, and Ranking Member DeFazio:

As conference discussions begin to reconcile the differences between the federal surface transportation legislation passed by both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, we write to express our support for retaining language passed unanimously by the House (Amendment H. Res.507-3) clarifying the eligibility of projects within National Scenic Areas (NSA's) for federal discretionary transportation funding.

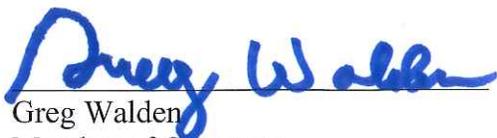
Clarifying the eligibility of NSA's throughout the nation for discretionary transportation grant funding will help ensure these areas are eligible for meaningful funding opportunities to enhance infrastructure within these unique federal designations. This language would not explicitly direct any funds towards any specific NSA, but it would ensure that they are eligible for discretionary funding programs. When this legislation was considered in the House, language was approved with unanimous support clarifying that projects on the National Highway System in National Scenic Areas are eligible for discretionary transportation funding (Sec. 1111 (d)(1)(A)(ii)(II)). We support NSA eligibility under any discretionary transportation program conferees ultimately agree upon.

There are currently 12 National Scenic Areas in eight states across the nation. For example, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the largest NSA, consists of 292,500 acres along 85 miles of Columbia River in Oregon and Washington. The NSA designation subjects these lands to strict federal land use and development restrictions. The unique federal involvement in NSA's makes transportation infrastructure an essential component to efficiently serve the interests of both local residents and visitors to the NSA.

As you work in Conference to report a bill back to both chambers, we urge your support of retaining language to ensure the funding eligibility of transportation projects on the National Highway System in designated National Scenic Areas across the nation. Thank you for your

work towards finalizing this important multi-year legislation to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs and support critical infrastructure projects across the nation.

Respectfully,



Greg Walden
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



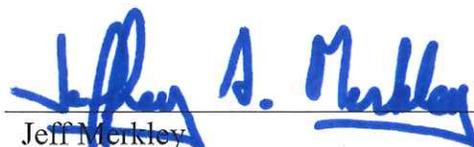
Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



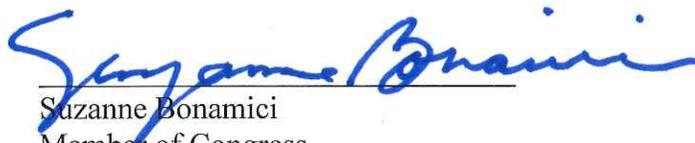
Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senator



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

Cc:

Representative John J. Duncan, Jr.
Representative Sam Graves
Representative Candice Miller
Representative Rick Crawford
Representative Lou Barletta
Representative Blake Farenthold
Representative Bob Gibbs
Representative Jeff Denham
Representative Reid Ribble
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Representative Crescent Hardy
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