



June 20, 2022

Senator Joe Manchin
Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Catherine Cortez Masto
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining
516 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mike Lee
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining
361A Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, Chair Cortez Masto and Ranking Member Lee:

On behalf of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition, we write to encourage you to support both the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act (S. 2254) and the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act (S. 3129), which would cumulatively protect nearly 800 miles of rivers in Montana and New Mexico. These two bills preserve and enhance some of America's most special free-flowing rivers that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation (fishing, boating, hiking, camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, etc.), protect fish and wildlife habitats, and safeguard clean water supplies for local communities and farmers and ranchers. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition represents more than 60 local, state, and national organizations from across the country that support Wild and Scenic River protection and stewardship.

Montana Headwaters Legacy Act (S. 2254). This bill would designate 385 miles of 20 rivers and streams in the upper Missouri and Yellowstone river systems, ensuring that some of the most prized waterways in Montana remain clean and free-flowing for generations to come. These iconic waterways, which

include the Gallatin, Madison, Yellowstone and Smith rivers, provide clean drinking water to cities and towns, irrigation for agriculture, and unmatched recreational opportunities that contribute to the state's flourishing \$7.1 billion outdoor recreation economy.

The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act was crafted by Montanans and is the product of over a decade of extensive public outreach. This legislation has been endorsed by more than 3,000 individual Montanans, 1,300 Montana businesses, several local chambers of commerce, the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, numerous local governments and local elected officials, Sibanye Stillwater Mining Company, and the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, among others. A recent poll commissioned by the University of Montana found that 79% of Montanans support the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, making it the most popular public lands legislation in the state.

M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act (S. 3129). This bill would designate almost 450 miles of the Gila and San Francisco Rivers and their tributaries and protect 144,000 acres of riverside lands. The Gila remains one of the longest rivers in the West and is the last free-flowing river of size in New Mexico. It is foundational to the state's outdoor recreation economy, which employs nearly 100,000 people and generates more than \$623 million in taxes annually. This nonpartisan bill was developed by partnering with Indigenous Nations, faith leaders, local governments, civic organizations, sportsmen, private property owners, and small businesses in Grant County and the surrounding area to ensure that its benefits to local communities and agriculture are far-reaching.

We support the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act and M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and thank you for holding hearings on these important bills. We urge your Committee to now schedule mark up for these bills that have been introduced and heard before the Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa Ronald, National Coordinator, Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition

On behalf of the following Wild and Scenic River Coalition member organizations:

Jack West, Policy and Advocacy Director, Alabama Rivers Alliance, Birmingham, Alabama

Mason Voehl, Executive Director, Amargosa Conservancy, Shoshone, California

Sarah Kilbourne, Executive Director, American Packrafting Association, Wilson, Wyoming

David Moryc, Senior Director of Wild and Scenic Rivers and Public Lands Policy, American Rivers, Washington, D.C.

Scott Bosse, Northern Rockies Director, American Rivers, Bozeman, Montana

Mike Fiebig, Southwest River Protection Program Director, American Rivers, Durango, Colorado

Kevin Colburn, National Stewardship Director, American Whitewater, Cullowhee, North Carolina

Kestrel Kunz, Southern Rockies Associate Stewardship Director, American Whitewater, Crested Butte, Colorado

Aimee Petras, Executive Director, Farmington River Watershed Association, Simsbury, Connecticut

Ronald Stork, Senior Policy Advocate, Friends of the River, Sacramento, California

Fred Akers, River Administrator, Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River, Newtonville, New Jersey

Charles Wolf Drimal, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Bozeman, Montana

Richard Dodds, Chair, Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River, Stockton, New Jersey

Dr. Denielle Perry, Director Free-flowing Rivers Lab, Northern Arizona University School of Earth and Sustainability, Flagstaff, Arizona

Anne Slugg, Chair, Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council, Concord, Massachusetts

Angie Rosser, Executive Director, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Charleston, West Virginia

Maggie Johnston, Executive Director, Wild Alabama, Moulton, Alabama