



December 5, 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

Dear Senator Manchin and Senator Barrasso:

On behalf of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition, we were pleased to hear the discussion at the December 1 Committee Hearing regarding an interest in assembling a public lands and waters package. We urge you to support inclusion of Wild and Scenic Rivers bills within such a package. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition represents more than 60 local, state, and national river organizations from across the country that support Wild and Scenic River protection and stewardship.

A number of Wild and Scenic River bills have been heard by the Committee this Congress including:

- S. 455 - Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
 - Hearing in Senate ENR.
 - Passed House w/ bipartisan support.
- S. 491 - York Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 2021
 - Reported by Senate ENR and placed on Senate Calendar.
 - Passed House w/ bipartisan support.
- S. 1459 - Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California Lands Act
 - Hearing in Senate ENR.
 - Passed House w/ bipartisan support.
- S. 1538 - Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act
 - Reported by Senate ENR and placed on Senate Calendar.
 - Hearing in House.
- S. 1589 - Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act
 - Reported by Senate ENR and placed on Senate Calendar.
 - Section V passed House w/ bipartisan support.

- S. 3129 - M.H. Dutch Salmon Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Reported by Senate ENR and placed on Senate Calendar.
- H.R. 4404 - Kissimmee River Wild and Scenic River Study Act
 - Passed the House w/ bipartisan support and referred to Senate ENR.

We support the inclusion of these worthy bills in a public lands and rivers package enacted before the end of the year. These bills enhance river recreation, which is a key driver of strong economic recovery, especially during uncertain times and inflation. Each year, outdoor recreation generates \$862 billion in economic output and supports 4.5 million jobs. Outdoor recreation employment increased by 13 percent in 2021. Inflation-adjusted (“real”) GDP for the outdoor recreation economy increased 19 percent, compared with a 6 percent increase for the overall U.S. economy. As during the previous several years, the U.S. continues to experience record-breaking growth in the number of people enjoying river recreation activities from rafting to river-side picnicking. Boating and fishing remain the largest outdoor recreation activities, meaning that small businesses and local economies across the country depend on healthy rivers. Science also shows that being outdoors on or near a river also benefits mental health.

We strongly urge you to support these bills as part of a bipartisan land and water package.

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, AL

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

Kevin Colburn, National Stewardship Director, *American Whitewater*, Cullowhee, NC

Mark Zakutansky, Director of Conservation Policy Engagement, *Appalachian Mountain Club*, Charlestown, MA

Sarah Kilbourne, Executive Director, *American Packrafting Association*, Missoula, MT

André Sanchez, Community Engagement & Conservation Policy Manager, *CalWild*, Sacramento, CA

Bethany Cotton, Conservation Director, *Cascadia Wildlands*, Eugene, OR

Aaron Mintzes, Senior Policy Counsel, *Earthworks*, Washington, D.C.

Matt Terry, Executive Director, *Ecuadorian Rivers Institute*, Basalt, CO

Jann Dorman, Executive Director, *Friends of the River*, Sacramento, CA

Fred Akers, Operations Manager, *Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River*, NJ

Ann Vileisis, President, *Kalmiopsis Audubon Society*, Port Orford, OR

Michael Dotson, Executive Director, *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center*, Ashland, OR

Charles Wolf Drimal, Deputy Director of Conservation, *Greater Yellowstone Coalition*, Bozeman, MT

John Little, President, *Missisquoi River Basin Association*, E. Berkshire, VT

Alan Hunt, Director of Policy and Grants, *Musconetcong Watershed Association*, Asbury, NJ

Lucy B. Wallace, Chair, *Nashua, Squannacook & Nissitissit Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council*, Groton, MA

Mark Allison, Executive Director, *New Mexico Wild*, Albuquerque, NM

Dr. Denielle Perry, Director Free-flowing Rivers Lab, *Northern Arizona University*, Flagstaff, AZ

Rich Cogen, Executive Director, *Ohio River Foundation*, Cincinnati, OH

Michael Morrison, Board President, *Pacific Rivers*, Portland, OR

Katherine Baer, Vice President River Programs, *River Network*, Boulder, CO

Grant Werschull, Co-Executive Director, *Smith River Alliance*, Crescent City, CA

Orion Hatch, Executive Director, *Snake River Fund*, Jackson, WY

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

Gloria Bancroft, Grants Program Manager, *Taunton River Stewardship Council*, Taunton, MA

Joseph Callahan, President, *Taunton River Watershed Alliance*, Taunton, MA

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

Judy Spiller, Chair, *York River Study Committee*, Eliot, Kittery, South Berwick, and York, ME