



Steve Moyer
Vice President of Government Affairs

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510

RE: Senate ENR Committee Business Meeting to Consider Pending Legislation (3/30/2017).

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell,

I am writing on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU), and our more than 160,000 members nationwide, to offer our views on the multiple legislative proposals listed for consideration during the Committee's March 30, 2017 Business Meeting.

TU Supports:

- [S.513](#), a bill to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon. (Mr. Wyden)
- [S.566](#), a bill to withdraw certain land in Okanogan County, Washington, to protect the land, and for other purposes. (Ms. Cantwell)
- [S.714](#), a bill to amend Public Law 103-434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, and for other purposes. (Ms. Cantwell)
- S.733, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes. (Ms. Murkowski) – Co-sponsored by Heinrich, Risch, Manchin, Heitkamp, Fisher

TU has concern with [S.131](#), a bill to provide for the exchange of certain National Forest System land and non-Federal land in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes. TU and would prefer any land exchange involving federal lands occur through the established and proven administrative process that allows for thorough public participation and full environmental review

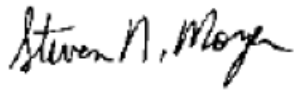
TU was disappointed that the mark up did not include a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, such as S. 569, the Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act. We urge the Committee to approve such a measure as soon as possible.

A mission to conserve, protect, & restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

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We detail our comments in the attached packet of letters. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven N. Moyer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Steve Moyer



March 30, 2017

Re: [S.513](#), a bill to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon. (Mr. Wyden)

Trout Unlimited supports S. 513, "The Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Designation Act," which will designate a special management area along Steamboat Creek in the world famous North Umpqua River drainage of Douglas County, Oregon.

S.513 honors Frank Moore, a World War II veteran and legendary steward of the North Umpqua River, and his wife, Jeanne, a tireless advocate for protecting this landscape and its emerald waters. The bill will permanently protect roughly 100,000 acres of public lands in south west Oregon, safeguarding drinking water, critical wildlife habitat, and cultural resources in a watershed identified as one of the most important ecological areas in the Pacific Northwest, and would preserve world-class opportunities for fishing and other types of outdoor recreation, boosting the local economy which depends on safeguarded public lands and waters.

This bill enjoys wide spread support from the timber industry, veterans groups, area tribes, local businesses, conservation, environmental and sportsmen groups. In fact, there is no known opposition to this bill. It protects a true Oregon treasure and honors two of America's greatest citizens.

The rural outdoor economy of Oregon depends on protecting its natural resources. People from around the United States, even from around the world come to the North Umpqua River to test their angling skills on the Steelhead that ascend this majestic river. The steelhead depend on the cold, clean water that flows from these forests. Without it, they would perish, and without the steelhead, area businesses would cease and our way of life would come to an end.

This bill ensures that for generations to come, all our citizens will enjoy the privilege of wading the cool waters of the North Umpqua river and perhaps encounter the prized native steelhead that call this place home.

We thank Senators Wyden and for introducing legislation and stand ready to work with the bill's sponsors and members of the committee to help advance this legislation.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

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Steve Moyer
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March 30, 2017

Re: [S.566](#), a bill to withdraw certain land in Okanogan County, Washington, to protect the land, and for other purposes. (Ms. Cantwell)

Trout Unlimited strongly supports S. 566, the Methow Headwaters Protection Act of 2017, which protects specific lands within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest from mining development.

The Methow River, which flows from its headwaters on Flagg Mountain to meet the Columbia 80 miles later, is one of Washington State's most iconic rivers and serves as a Pacific Northwest mecca for hunters, anglers, recreationists, and conservationists.

The Methow provides key habitat for a myriad of native fish species, including three species of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmonid species: Upper Columbia spring Chinook, Upper Columbia steelhead trout, and bull trout. The salmon and steelhead that return to this river must navigate past 9 dams and endure countless impacts through an over-stressed ecosystem in order to reach their spawning grounds. Trout Unlimited's Western Water and Habitat Program has invested millions of dollars and thousands of staff hours to work hand-in-hand with the community on projects to improve trout and salmon habitat throughout the Methow River watershed. On a larger scale, the Federal government has also invested hundreds of millions to repair and restore these populations— both in the Methow, and throughout the Columbia Basin. Protecting the Methow headwaters will safeguard these investments prevent the unavoidable damage to water resources associated with large-scale mining on Flagg Mountain.

The Methow Valley has built its economic success upon two main industries: Agriculture and Recreation - both of which rely heavily on healthy waters. A large-scale mine in the headwaters of the Methow River watershed would (1) pose an unacceptable risk to ESA-listed fish species that are already on the brink of extinction, (2) undermine millions in taxpayer dollars spent on fisheries recovery in this watershed, and (3) devastate the local recreation-based economy, which relies on sustained ecosystem health (and fisheries) in the Methow River watershed.

The campaign to withdrawal the Upper Methow from mineral entry has amassed an impressive coalition – a large and diverse group partners, including over 100 local businesses and organizations, tribes, local and state elected officials, and numerous sportsmen and recreational organizations. The prospect of an industrial-scale mine on Flagg Mountain or anywhere else in the Upper Methow Valley represents a direct threat to the very values at the heart of success in the community and the quarter-billion-dollar investment private landowners, tribes, and state and federal agencies have made in conservation, restoration, and recreation efforts over the years.

Simply put, industrial-scale mining would threaten all that is special about the Methow and devastate its local economy, natural environment, and quality of life. On behalf of our more than 150,000 members across the country—including the more than 4,700 who reside in the state of Washington—we sincerely thank Senators Murray and Cantwell for introducing this bill.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

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March 30, 2017

Re: [S.714](#), a bill to amend Public Law 103-434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, and for other purposes. (Ms. Cantwell)

Trout Unlimited strongly supports S.714, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2017. S. 714 authorizes the Initial Development Phase of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and will provide important drought relief for water users while at the same time improve the basin's fisheries and ecosystems. This bill is a critical step forward in achieving urgently needed benefits to water supply, drought relief, fisheries, and stream flows. Among the innovative actions in the Initial Development Phase are:

- Fish passage at Cle Elum and Rimrock dams, allowing fish to access 65 miles of river habitat blocked by Reclamation dams within the basin;
- The Kachess Reservoir Drought Relief Pumping Plant, with construction and operation financed by water users rather than taxpayers (no other surface water storage projects are authorized by the legislation), and conveyance between Keechelus and Kachess to balance storage and improve fish flows;
- 85,000 acre-feet of water conservation;
- Habitat restoration projects including mainstem Yakima River floodplain restoration, meadow restoration in the Teanaway Valley and elsewhere, barrier removals, and projects to remove roads from floodplains;
- Groundwater storage projects that will provide cooler, more plentiful stream flows and reduce the need for new surface water storage;
- Enhanced water markets; and
- Protection of 50,000 acres in the Teanaway River Valley as a working, Community Forest

S. 714 is a critical step towards executing an innovative, integrated response to drought and water supply security that supports our fish, farms, families, and forests. We thank Senators Cantwell and Murray for reintroducing this bill.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

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March 30, 2017

Re: [S.131](#), a bill to provide for the exchange of certain National Forest System land and non-Federal land in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes. (Ms. Murkowski)

Trout Unlimited has concerns with this proposed land exchange and would prefer any land exchange involving federal lands occur through the established and proven administrative process that allows for thorough public participation and full environmental review. Looking to the future, we encourage the committee to look for solutions that avoid transfers of federal land to state or private ownership. Maintaining federal ownership and management of public lands in Alaska, and the Tongass National Forest in particular, is especially important for sportsmen, outfitters and guides, fishermen, subsistence users, and local residents of all walks of life.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

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