

Testimony of-

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**U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
The Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2642,
'The Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act'
July 10, 2019**

Growing up in Pacific County in the 50's and early 60's, my future career path was pretty clear. I knew I would work in the timber industry. The son and grandson of Pacific County loggers, I was proud to take one of the abundant and comparatively well-paid jobs in the timber industry after I finished studying forest engineering in college and then graduated from the Yale School of Forestry. I wanted to stay close to home and, like my friends and family, I couldn't imagine working indoors. The work let me continue to enjoy the forests and streams where I had hiked, camped, hunted and fished when I was a youngster. During a long stint with ITT Rayonier, I developed the company's northwest forest business plan and managed its timberlands operations in Forks.

Corporate career advancement often requires moves so, eventually, my family and I were asked to move to the south and then to the northeast. It was all very interesting but we missed our family and friends and the forests back home. So, in 1993, I returned with a much greater appreciation for the Olympic Peninsula's remaining virgin forests & salmon streams. Not just as a draw for tourists but also a residential draw for entrepreneurs and forest-lovers like myself and my family. That renewed appreciation is also what prompted me to be an early advocate for new Wild Olympics legislation.

My own experience as a CEO and Entrepreneur is that our area's natural treasures- which provide world-class outdoor recreation, clean water and our area's high quality of living- are what give us a competitive edge over other regions in attracting and retaining the talented people new companies require. Wilderness and wild and scenic river protections would help protect & grow the local jobs that depend on our ability to compete for talent against other regions, and they would enhance our recruitment efforts as we work to grow new businesses in the future. And as a former Timber Industry Executive, I appreciate that Senator Murray and Rep Kilmer's final compromise proposal was scaled-back to ensure it would not impact current timber jobs.

Wild Olympics would protect and promote the same spectacular public lands and high quality of life that are helping to drive growth and create local jobs in real estate, tech, health care, construction and many other sectors of our economy today. Our ancient forests, salmon, rivers and stunning scenery are the North Olympic Peninsula's new comparative economic advantage over other regions. In fact, every few years or so the nonpartisan Headwaters Economics releases their "West is Best" studies. It consistently show that protected public lands in the West Create a comparative economic advantage for rural communities. The Headwaters studies show that:

- Protected public lands attract companies, entrepreneurs and workers
- Rural Counties with protected public lands experience stronger economic Growth
- Protected public lands assist in new employee recruiting efforts
- Incomes are higher near protected public lands

This is likely why this Wild Olympics legislation has now been endorsed by nearly 550 local Olympic Peninsula & Hood Canal Region Businesses. And why I have been a stalwart supporter of the Wild Olympics Campaign from the start.