

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

December 1, 2023

Randy Moore  
Chief  
U.S. Forest Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Moore:

I write in support of an application submitted by The Nature Conservancy of Washington for the U.S. Forest Service's *Forest Legacy Program* for the Cle Elum Ridge Large Landscape Forest Legacy Project.

Directly adjacent to the towns of Cle Elum and Roslyn is a large block of private forest lands called Cle Elum Ridge, currently at risk of conversion into resort communities due to its high-quality recreation assets and easy access to Seattle. Strong developing pressures in Kittitas County have already led to residential development already next to the property.

If funded, this project will support the long-term conservation plan developed by The Nature Conservancy, to ensure the lands may be acquired from the private landowner and be protected in perpetuity and managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. This protection will enable greater forest health, wildfire resilience, water supply, and recreation benefits. Year-round recreation and public access will generate an estimated \$217 million in consumer spending to Kittitas County, stimulating the economy of surrounding communities. Additionally, the project will form part of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, a water resource management plan that will help water quality and quantity benefits. Finally, forest management and wildfire resistance as a result of the project will prevent new development in the wildland urban interface, increasing the community's resilience.

Thank you for your consideration of The Nature Conservancy of Washington's application. Please contact Bree Rabourn in my Seattle office at 206-553-0724 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
United States Senator