



April 22, 2021

Senator Mike Crapo  
United States Senate: Idaho  
251 E. Front St., Suite 205  
Boise ID, 83702  
208-334-1776

Senator James E. Risch  
United States Senate: Idaho  
350 N. 9th St., Suite 302  
Boise, Idaho 83702  
208-342-7985

Mike Garrity  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies  
PO BOX 505  
Helena, MT 59624

**RE: Selkirk Conservation Alliance SUPPORT for H.R.3334 (1321) Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act sponsored by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY-12)**

Dear Honorable Idaho State Representatives Mr. Crapo Mr. Risch and Mr. Garrity,

In honor of Earth Day 2021 Selkirk Conservation Alliance (SCA) would like to formally announce our support for the introduction of the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA).

The Northern (wild) Rockies is the largest intact ecosystem in the lower 48 states and provides critical habitat to many threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. In addition to critical habitat this region encompasses some of the largest and last undeveloped watershed complexes left in the contiguous continental US. These systems ultimately supply much of the source water for some of our nations largest drinking water systems; the Columbia River & Missouri River systems.

And, if clean water and intact habitats that support thousands of species weren't enough, the permanent preservation of the forested areas within this region represents one of our nation's last defenses for combatting climate change. Modern scientific research emphasizes the importance of forests for carbon sequestration and the forests of the Pacific Northwest are among the largest stores of living carbon on the planet, and have a higher carbon density than almost any other forest type in the world. In addition, soil disturbance caused by logging has been determined to be a major contributor of greenhouse gasses in the Pacific Northwest (and globally). Research shows that old growth forests store far more carbon than younger stands. Logging older trees and replacing them

with younger ones emits tremendous amounts of CO2 and creates a “carbon debt” that takes many decades or centuries to repay.

**NREPA represents the only large scale, comprehensive approach for protecting not just threatened and endangered flora and fauna but large scale functioning systems that are critical for current and future human survival.**

SCA has witnessed and fought against the profound and ongoing destruction and mismanagement of our regional natural resources for the past 34 years. Our community and members have seen firsthand the destruction short term thinking and planning can have on our precious and finite clean water, land and air.

We further urge you to consider the fact that this legislation would also promote job growth in Idaho and the PNW by creating jobs that would restore old roads and clear cuts. These green jobs have higher than average growth rates and represent a more sustainable economic base that is not subject to the “boom and bust” economic cycles of industries based on extracting resources from the land.

In addition to job growth, it is estimated that, this legislation would save taxpayers \$245 million over a 10-year period through the elimination of federally subsidized lumber harvests, mining and oil/gas production, and grazing allotments on federally owned land.

Of further benefit to Idahoans, the legislation will help ranchers and farmers by keeping water available downstream until later in the season when it is most needed and allow for historic uses such as hunting, fishing and firewood gathering.

The legislation has been introduced and discussed in Congress five times since 1993. It is imperative and long overdue that permanent protection be granted to this region NOW. Without protection from Congress this critical and precious landscape is subject to deforestation, pollution, and development and, over time, these critical functioning watershed and forest ecosystems would be irreparably damaged, fragmented and degraded and unable to support life.

Our public lands belong to all of us, and it is our/YOUR duty to protect our nations national heritage, the old-growth forests, snow-capped mountains, and freshwater rivers and lakes of this country.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Anderson*

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