

January 15th, 2014

Representative Joe Schmick
Representative Susan Fagan
Representative Larry Haler
Representative Luis Moscoso
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

RE: House Bill 2119, Designating Palouse Falls as the State Waterfall

Dear Representatives Schmick, Fagan, Haler, and Moscoso:

On behalf of American Whitewater I write in support of your legislation, House Bill 2119, to designate Palouse Falls as the State Waterfall. As noted in your legislation, this waterfall has special significance for the whitewater paddling community and we appreciate your recognition of its important cultural, aesthetic, geological, recreational, and historical values.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) river conservation organization founded in 1954. American Whitewater's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. As a conservation-oriented paddling organization, we have over 5000 members and 100 local-based affiliate clubs, representing whitewater paddlers across the nation. American Whitewater's affiliate clubs in Washington State include BEWET (Boeing Recreation Club), EPIC Adventures (Eastern Washington University Outdoor Program), Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Spokane Kayak and Canoe Club, University Kayak Club (University of Washington), Washington Kayak Club, and Washington Recreational River Runners. Through our clubs and individual members we directly represent a population of approximately 3000 paddling enthusiasts in the state.

While only two individuals have kayaked Palouse Falls to date, and it is only appropriate for professionals with extensive training and experience running big waterfalls, it is well known among the whitewater paddling community as the site Tyler Bradt's World Record Waterfall Descent in April 2009 and a subsequent run by Rafael Ortiz in April 2012. Given the significance of this waterfall to our community, stopping to view the waterfall is a popular activity for our members from across the country on their road trips through the region. Recognizing its significance to the state and the region by designating it as the State Waterfall is supported by our organization. Please contact me if I can be of additional assistance in supporting this legislation or working with you on any alternative approaches to recognize the specific significance of Palouse Falls.

Sincerely,



Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director