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11 August 2005

Representative Dave Reichert
1223 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Wild Sky Wilderness

Dear Representative Reichert:

On behalf of the membership of American Whitewater and our affiliate clubs in Western Washington and Southwest BC (including Vancouver Kayak Club, Washington Kayak Club, University Kayak Club, PaddleTrails Canoe Club, The Mountaineers, and Washington Recreational River Runners), we wish to express our appreciation for your support of the Wild Sky Wilderness Act (H.R. 851). Our collective membership which in this region represents over 3000 paddlers has a strong interest in the long-term future of the Skykomish River and its major tributaries. We thank you for the leadership you have shown in working to designate more than 100,000 acres of new wilderness in the State of Washington.

The Skykomish River is internationally renowned for its world-class whitewater opportunities for all manner of river travelers. Featuring several class 4 and 5 rapids with car-sized boulders and an average gradient of 100 feet per mile, the North Fork offers unique challenges to the expert paddler. At the same time, other sections of the river are equally accommodating to beginners and intermediate paddlers featuring breathtaking views of snow-capped Mt. Index along its tree-lined banks.

Permanently protecting the low elevation forestland on either side of this magnificent river and the tributaries that feed it is an essential step toward preserving this incredible recreational asset for current and future generations. Few places can boast this type of quality whitewater experience within an hour and a half of 2.5 million people. The legislation you have co-sponsored and which the Senate has passed will protect a recreational and aesthetic resource that our region can be proud of and that will benefit local communities that serve as the gateway to this incredible natural resource.

We appreciate your commitment to this legislation and ask for your continued assistance in moving it through the House this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas O'Keefe'.