

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wild Olympics Media Image [Gallery](#)

### **Senator Murray & Representative Kilmer Reintroduce Wild Olympics Bill with Groundswell of New Support from Peninsula Tribes, Mayors & Businesses**

*Citing benefits to Olympic Peninsula salmon recovery, local jobs, economy, & clean water, the **Quinault, Quileute, Elwha, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribes** and mayors of **Port Angeles, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Port Townsend, Elma and Ocean Shores** joined more than [800](#) local businesses, elected officials, farms, faith leaders, sportsmen, conservation & recreation groups now backing Wild Olympics*

**QUILCENE, Wash. (May 9, 2019)** Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06) reintroduced the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries, a total of 464 river miles, as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Designed through extensive community input to protect ancient forests, clean water and salmon streams as well as enhance outdoor recreation, the legislation would set aside the first new wilderness on Olympic National Forest in nearly three decades and the first-ever protected wild and scenic rivers on the Olympic Peninsula.

***"I'm proud today to stand with Representative Kilmer and more advocates, elected officials, community leaders, tribes, and businesses than ever before to introduce this important legislation that will protect our priceless wild spaces for generations to come,"*** said Senator Murray, who first introduced the legislation in 2012. ***"This proposal is the product of years of collaboration with local stakeholders and a shared commitment to preserving the precious natural features and resources of our prized Olympic Peninsula, and I look forward to bringing this new energy to our push to move this bill forward in Congress."***

***"As someone who grew up in Port Angeles, I've always said that we don't have to choose between economic growth and protecting our environment. We can and should do both,"*** said Representative Kilmer. ***"I'm proud to support this practical, balanced strategy, that will protect the wildest and most pristine places on the Peninsula while ensuring we can keep and grow jobs in our natural resource industries and other sectors. I'm grateful for the partnership of Senator Murray and community leaders from across the region, including small business owners, landowners, environmental advocates, and tribes, who have been dedicated to finding a strategy that works for folks across the entire region."***

The introduction was cheered by the Wild Olympics Coalition, which also today unveiled over 100 new endorsements from local Olympic Peninsula Tribes, elected officials and businesses rallying behind the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The new additions bring the total number of local Olympic Peninsula & Hood Canal area businesses, CEOs, elected officials, farms, faith leaders, sportsmen, and conservation and outdoor recreation groups to

more than [800](#) endorsers, including the Quinault, Quileute, Elwha & Jamestown S’Klallam Tribes and the mayors of Port Angeles, Port Townsend, Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Ocean Shores & Elma, among many others. The new endorsements by local Olympic Peninsula Tribes, business owners, mayors and city councilmembers from all four counties of the Peninsula were collected over the last 8 months on letters addressed to Senator Murray and Rep. Kilmer. More than 12,000 local residents have signed petitions in support.

The legislation has been carefully crafted through extensive community input to ensure the proposal will have no impact on existing timber jobs. It would permanently protect critical salmon habitat and sources of clean drinking water for local communities, while also protecting and expanding world-class outdoor recreation opportunities like hiking, camping, boating, hunting and fishing without closing any roads.

The new endorsements come after Local Olympic Peninsula Economic Leaders recently announced a new partnership with REI and Patagonia to promote the Wild Olympics Campaign in REI’s flagship store and online to encourage their customers to visit the spectacular Olympic Peninsula. As part of the partnership, local elected officials from the Olympic Peninsula, the Wild Olympics Campaign, outdoor recreation groups, REI, and Patagonia unveiled a new [“Destination Wild Olympics” map](#), highlighting some of the great recreation places in the Wild Olympics proposal. The map was designed with extensive input from local Olympic Peninsula business owners, economic development leaders and local elected officials, who announced their support for the initiative, calling it an amazing economic opportunity for the Peninsula.

## **TESTIMONIALS**

**Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Chairwoman, Frances Charles:** “The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (“Lower Elwha”) strongly supports the proposed Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and appreciates Sen. Murray’s and Rep. Kilmer’s sponsorship of this important legislation. We believe that it represents a fair compromise between potentially competing interests of preservation, economic use, and recreation. This legislation creates 126,600 acres of new wilderness and nineteen new wild and scenic rivers designations in the Olympic National Forest, the Olympic National Park and Washington State Department of Natural Resource-managed land. For Lower Elwha, the most important aspect of these new designations is the increased protection for salmon habitat. And we appreciate that it expressly acknowledges the fundamental interests and expertise of all treaty tribes in the restoration of fish habitat. This is an important complement to our ongoing successes, along with our federal and State partners, in restoring Elwha River fisheries in the aftermath of dam removal.”

**Quinault Indian Nation President Fawn Sharp:** Our Tribe urges swift passage of the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. As stated in the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission’s “Treaty Rights at Risk” report, “Salmon recovery is based on the crucial premise that we can protect what habitat remains while we restore previously degraded habitat conditions. Unfortunately significant investments in recovery may not be realized because the rate of habitat loss continues to outpace restoration. The resulting net decline in habitat demonstrates the federal government’s failure to protect the Tribes’ treaty-reserved rights.” In an era where we are witnessing unprecedented rollbacks

of environmental safeguards on federal public lands, the Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect some of the healthiest, intact salmon habitat left on the Peninsula.

**Quileute Tribal Council Chairman Douglas Woodruff Jr.** "The Quileute Tribe supports passage of the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It represents a well-crafted compromise that provides critical protections for fish and wild life habitat and water quality, while also respecting the treaty rights and management prerogatives of the Quileute Tribe. Protecting the best remaining habitat is imperative as tribal, state and federal governments and citizens throughout the Olympic region commit millions of dollars and incalculable volunteer hours to restoration activities in the face of declining salmon populations, fishing closures, threats to Orcas, and the impacts of climate change. The current version of the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is a significant and vital step forward to "protect the best," and the Quileute Tribe urges swift passage of this legislation."

**Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Chairman Ron Allen:** "As stated in the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission's "Treaty Rights at Risk" report, "Salmon recovery is based on the crucial premise that we can protect what habitat remains while we restore previously degraded habitat conditions. Unfortunately, significant investments in recovery may not be realized because the rate of habitat loss continues to outpace restoration. The resulting net decline in habitat demonstrates the federal government's failure to protect the Tribes' treaty-reserved rights." In an era where we are witnessing unprecedented rollbacks of environmental safeguards on federal public lands, the Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect some of the healthiest, intact salmon habitat left on the Peninsula. It is our heritage and cultural principles to protect the lands and waters Nature provides, as well as the natural resources she sustains. Therefore, we do continue to support and urge swift passage of the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act"

**Port Angeles Mayor, Sissi Bruch:** "I'm pleased to announce my enthusiastic support and the support of a majority of the Port Angeles City Council for Senator Murray's and Representative Kilmer's Wild Olympics legislation, as it is a sound investment in our future. We join more than 80 current and former Olympic Peninsula & Hood Canal Region local elected officials calling on Congress to pass the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. We understand that permanently protect our ancient forests, clean water and World-Class Outdoor Recreation destinations makes solid economic sense. It works in tandem with our all of our communities' investment in salmon recovery and safeguards our drinking water and wild corridors for future generations. Our region is blessed with stunning scenery, pristine wilderness areas critical to fish and wildlife and enviable diversity all of which contribute to attracting skilled employees to our rural cities, and that is something that we desperately need. We thank Senator Murray & Representative Kilmer for their leadership!"

**Aberdeen Mayor, Erik Larsen:** "Aberdeen has a history of working forests driving our local economy. As recreation and tourism continue to grow, our forests are finding new work. The new Wild Olympics legislation proposed by Rep. Kilmer and Sen. Murray has benefited from years of public input to balance the need to protect our natural resources with the need to protect the jobs they support. That is why I am proud to support the Wild Olympics legislation."

**Bill Taylor, President of Taylor Shellfish Farms (Shelton):** "Senator Murray and Representative Kilmer's Wild Olympics legislation will help protect our state's shellfish industry, including hundreds of shellfishing jobs in Hood Canal alone – and many more in related industries like processing, shipping and sales. It protects the rivers and streams vital to the health of our hatcheries and to the health and restoration of Puget Sound. Our oyster beds depend on the clean, cold, silt-free water that drains off

Olympic National Forest into Hood Canal. Protecting these watersheds allows our industry to grow, expand and continue to benefit the economy and ecology of Washington State. We are grateful for their leadership.”

**Ashley Nichole Lewis, Bad Ash Fishing Guide Service (Tahola) & member, [Sportsmen For Wild Olympics](#):** “Conservation for me on the Olympic Peninsula means that the next generation and generations to come can come out here and experience the way that I experience it and the way my grandpa experienced it when he fished out here and that forever we always have this – what is wild and what is the Olympic Peninsula and our culture today.”

**James Thomas, President & CEO Thermedia Corp/MasQs (Shelton):** “The Wild Olympics legislation would help protect the outstanding way of life that is an important reason people choose to live, work and play here in Mason County with the stunning backdrop of the Olympic Mountains in our backyard. The ancient forests, wild rivers and scenic beauty of the Olympics are the foundation of our high “Quality of Life” that attracts visitors, entrepreneurs, new residents and investment in our communities, strengthening our local economy. In fact, these spectacular public lands were the final determinant when I chose the Olympic Peninsula as the new home for my medical device manufacturing company. Ten years later my heart still sings when I round a corner or top a hill and the Olympics come into view. I applaud Senator Murray and Representative Kilmer for working to protect the Peninsula’s economic future.”

**Fred Rakevich, Retired logger and forty-nine year veteran of the timber industry (Elma):** “I am a retired logger who worked for fifty years in the timber industry. I have also fished and kayaked most of the major rivers in the Olympics. I was born and raised in Grays Harbor, but have traveled half way around the world. In all my travels, nothing impressed me more than the natural beauty of the Olympic Mountain Range and the clear running waters that begin their journey flowing toward the lands below. Timber is and always will be part of the Olympic Peninsula’s proud heritage. But our ancient forests and wild rivers are the natural legacy we will leave to our children and grandchildren. Senator Murray and Representative Kilmer’s bill protects our natural heritage while respecting our timber heritage. I thank them for their thoughtful leadership, and future generations will thank them too.”

**Casey Weigel, Owner & Head Guide of Waters West Guide Service (Montesano) and member, of [Sportsmen for Wild Olympics](#):** “Through hard work and our passion for our rivers and fishing, my wife and I have grown our small business enough to be able to help 3 other year-round and seasonal local guides support families, who love fishing just as much as we do. I support the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild & Scenic Rivers Act because our rivers and our salmon are our lifeblood and, without them, businesses like ours, the local jobs they support, and the dollars they bring into our local economy would dry up. The Wild Olympics proposal would simply make the current safeguards protecting our rivers on Olympic National Forest permanent. That’s all it does. It doesn’t change access or cost timber jobs. And if it did, I wouldn’t support it, because my family works in the timber industry. There are many challenges facing our rivers and salmon, with lots of debate and millions of dollars spent trying to help restore clean water and habitat downstream. But one basic, simple piece of the foundation we can put in place now that won’t cost any of us anything, is to permanently protect the healthy habitat on the federal lands upstream against any misguided attempts to develop them in the future. That’s why I am a proud supporter of the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. For Our Future.”

**State Representative Mike Chapman, 24th Legislative District (Port Angeles):** “I have been very excited about the economic & recreational opportunities Wild Olympics will bring to the Olympic Peninsula.

With REI and Patagonia's support our corner of the world is now attracting visitors from all over. Wild Olympics is our future, for fresh air, clean water, pristine forests and future generations!"

**Sarah Muszynski, Owner, Blue Horizons Paddlesports(Lake Cushman):** "As an outdoor recreation business owner and an avid outdoorsman, my livelihood and lifestyle depend on clean, free-flowing rivers. Visitors to Olympic National Park and businesses like mine annually contribute \$220 million in local economic benefits and support 2,708 jobs. This economic benefit depends on access to the high quality natural resources the Olympic Peninsula is known for and protection of those resources. Visitors from around the world come to experience the place we call home. Protecting these resources is an investment in our region's economic future, and the smart thing to do."

**Michelle Sandoval, Port Townsend City Councilor (Port Townsend):** "This legislation will help permanently protect clean drinking water for local Peninsula communities. For example, one of the places proposed for Wilderness protection is in the Big Quilcene watershed, which filters the clean, cold drinking water for the city of Port Townsend. Protecting forests and rivers on federal lands upstream protects our investments in salmon habitat and water quality downstream. We are grateful for Representative Kilmer's and Senator Murray's help in protecting Port Townsend's clean water."

**Harriet Reyenga, Independent realtor for Windermere Real Estate (Port Angeles):** "The Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild & Scenic Rivers Act will 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, construction and many other sectors of our economy today. Our ancient forests, salmon, rivers and amazing landscapes are the north Olympic Peninsula's competitive economic advantage over other regions. We should do all we can to protect and promote these natural treasures. The Wild Olympics legislation will do both."

**Dave Bailey, Past President of the Grey Wolf Fly Fishing Club in Sequim, WA & co-founder of [Sportsmen for Wild Olympics](#):** "People think that because our salmon streams on Olympic National Forest appear as they've always been, that they are safe. Unfortunately, that's the furthest thing from the truth. There are determined efforts underway in Congress and the Administration to roll back current safeguards and open these sensitive spawning streams to small hydropower development, industrial clear-cutting and more road building once more. That's bad for fish, game, and sportsmen. This legislation is critical to preserve what we have."

**Jasmine Dickhoff, Mayor, City of Hoquiam:** "I'm from here, I grew up here, and I'm proud to call the Harbor my home. Harborites are hardy, self-reliant, and we often have a different point of view than other communities. We choose to live without all the amenities of big-city life and we do so because we love it here. Hundreds of local Peninsula businesses, sportsmen organizations & local elected officials like myself are backing Wild Olympics because it embraces that same pride – our shared love of the land and our desire to permanently protect the most special parts of our spectacular backyard. However, as a local elected official concerned about our economic future, I believe we need to be seizing new economic opportunities while taking great care not to hurt our current ones. That's why it's important to me that Representative Kilmer & Senator Murray have worked to ensure their final proposal won't hurt local timber jobs. It's also why I believe REI and Patagonia's promotion of Wild Olympics is a validation of one of our important new economic advantages."

**State Representative Steve Tharinger, 24th Legislative District (Sequim):** "It is easy to see and understand the ecological value of the Wild Olympics idea, conserving clean and free flowing rivers, but what is sometimes missed is the economic value that maintaining places like Wild Olympics brings by

attracting people to the special outdoors of the Olympic region. I want to thank REI and Patagonia for engaging local community leaders like myself to help design the map, and for recognizing that encouraging people to get out and enjoy the special places in the Wild Olympics proposal brings economic benefits to the communities I represent.”

**Mark and Desiree’ Dodson, Owners Westport Marina Cottages(Westport):** “We’re one of the hundreds of local Peninsula businesses backing Wild Olympics because it would protect & promote the same priceless natural treasures that are cornerstones of our economy. Our ancient temperate rainforests & wild rivers are iconic one-of-kind outdoor recreation destinations that draw visitors & new residents from around the world.”

**Roy Nott, Aberdeen Businessman:** “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. It was a no-brainer for me. The woods was where my childhood friends and I also chose to spend most of our free time. To advance your career often requires moves, and eventually my family and I were asked to move to the south and 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. Not just as a draw for tourists but also a residential draw for forest-lovers like myself and my family. That is also why I chose to be an early advocate for new Wild Olympics legislation.

And 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 our companies require. Wilderness and wild and scenic river protection 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 to grow our businesses in the future. And as a former Timber Industry Executive, I appreciate that Senator Murray and Rep Kilmer’s final proposal ensured it would not impact current timber jobs. This why the 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 from the start.”

**Douglas Scott, Owner of Exotic Hikes and The Outdoor Society (Hood Canal):** “Outside my door, the river, forests and mountains of the Olympic Peninsula beckon me to hike and climb. In the Northwest corner of the contiguous United States, far from the hustle and bustle of the big cities, our glacial-fed rivers, full of salmon and surrounded by majestic eagles constantly inspire millions of locals and visitors to the region. Each year, over four million outdoor recreation enthusiasts head to the region, hoping to find a slice of natural beauty in pristine forests and impossibly gorgeous river valleys. As an author, tour guide and advocate for the Olympic Peninsula, I have witnessed the importance of nature and outdoor recreation in the Pacific Northwest. Thanks to the support outdoor enthusiasts from all walks of life, passing the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will help ensure that even more of the stunning scenery will be protected and accessible for all. I am proud to Support the Wild Olympics. Come visit and fall in love with the beauty of rainforests, wild rivers and breathtaking adventures and you will too.”

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