

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2017

The Honorable John Kelly
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear General Kelly:

We are disappointed to learn of the Department of the Interior's recommendations to diminish boundaries and protections for national monuments, including the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM or Monument) in our home state. We still have not received a briefing from the Department of the Interior regarding the proposed changes even though Secretary Zinke pledged to work directly with us. Instead, we learned about the report through the news. We are also concerned about the numerous factual errors in the draft report and the role they played in recommending changes to Cascade-Siskiyou. Had we been appropriately consulted, we could have easily addressed these errors prior to the report being sent to the President.

Listed below is a brief sampling of the factual errors contained in the draft report:

"These are lands statutorily set aside for permanent forest production in the Oregon and California Revested Lands Sustain Yield Management Act of 1937 (O&C Act)."

- The Oregon and California Lands Act also requires the Department of the Interior to manage these lands for "watershed protection, regulating stream flows, and contributing to the economic stability of local communities and industries, and providing recreation facilities and sustainable economies." Through the flexibility of the monument proclamation, Cascade-Siskiyou contributes to all of these goals, including forestry projects that promote ecological restoration and public safety.

"Motorized transportation was prohibited in the original CSNM designation. The expansion only allows for motorized transportation after a transportation-management plan is completed."

- Neither the original designation nor the expansion prohibits the use of motorized transportation in the monument. In fact, hundreds of miles of roads in the original and expanded monument are open to motorized use.

"The Proclamation should be amended...to protect...hunting and fishing rights."

- Neither the original nor the expanded monument proclamations reduce “hunting and fishing rights.” State wildlife agencies continue to regulate hunting and fishing in both the Oregon and California portions of the monument.

Extensive public input has been the hallmark of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument region for almost two decades extending from extensive meetings throughout southwest Oregon in 1999 related to the original Monument designation, through to October 2016, a public meeting in southern Oregon with the Deputy Secretary of the Interior for the Obama Administration which Senator Merkley hosted to gather local input. Hundreds of Oregonians, including local elected leaders and representatives of local tribes, attended that meeting, and more than 100 individuals testified.

Jackson, Klamath, and Siskiyou counties held additional meetings to gather public input, and provided that input to then-President Obama. Senator Merkley’s office also collected written input from thousands of Oregonians for more than a month following the public meeting, and submitted those written comments to the president. During the written comment process, Senator Merkley’s office received 4,313 comments supporting the expanded monument and 1,175 comments in opposition.

The public input process mentioned above led to substantive changes to the map to address concerns that had been raised. The final declaration included less than 48,000 acres, which is a reduction of over 14,000 acres from the discussion draft proposal put forward by Oregon’s Senators. For example, ranchers that hold grazing leases within the proposed expansion requested that their grazing allotments be excluded from the expansion boundaries. These requests were forwarded to the Obama administration and as a result, one allotment was largely excluded from the final boundaries while the second allotment, which is located in a sensitive watershed, had more of its territory excluded than in earlier proposals.

In addition, many private landowners within the existing monument and proposed monument expansion expressed their strong support for monument expansion and for being included within expanded monument boundaries. Nevertheless, some timber companies and other private landowners within the proposed expansion requested that 19 specific parcels be excluded. Ultimately, 14 of these parcels were excluded from the final boundary. Approximately 7,000 acres of BLM land in Klamath County were excluded, including parcels planned for timber management as well.

In light of the robust level of support for and the measured approach to expanding the monument, we request that you consult with us before any action is taken to alter the boundaries or management of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator