

- ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE ● ALLEGHENY DEFENSE PROJECT ●
 - ALPINE LAKES PROTECTION SOCIETY ●
 - AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION ●
- AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY ● AMERICAN LANDS ALLIANCE ●
 - AMERICAN RIVERS ● AMERICAN WHITEWATER ●
 - BARK ● CONSERVATION NORTHWEST ●
 - DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE ● EARTHJUSTICE ● EPIC ●
 - FOREST GUARDIANS ● GIFFORD PINCHOT TASK FORCE ●
 - GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION ●
- INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION ●
 - KLAMATH-SISKIYOU WILDLANDS CENTER ●
 - NATURAL RESOURCE DEFENSE COUNCIL ●
 - NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL
- PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL ● PILCHUCK-AUDUBON SOCIETY ●
 - OLYMPIC FOREST COALITION ● OREGON WILD ●
- SIERRA CLUB ● SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FOREST COALITION ●
 - SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER ●
 - THE ACCESS FUND ● THE CLINCH COALITION ●
 - THE LANDS COUNCIL ● THE MOUNTAINEERS ●
 - THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY ●
 - U.S. PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP ●
 - VIRGINIA FOREST WATCH ●
- WASHINGTON WATERSHED RESTORATION INITIATIVE COALITION ●
 - WASHINGTON WILDERNESS COALITION ●
 - WILD FISH CONSERVANCY ● WILDLANDS CPR ●
- WILDWEST INSTITUTE ● WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE ●

Dear Senator,

As you look ahead to the conference committee process for the FY 2008 Interior appropriations, the undersigned organizations urge you to support the Legacy Roads Remediation Initiative as defined in the House Interior Appropriations bill (HR 2643).

The Forest Service is responsible for managing 380,000 miles of roads nationally. Due to inadequate funding and neglect, many of these roads are deteriorating and causing serious environmental damage. Each year, hundreds of thousands of tons of sediment from these poorly maintained roads run into our nation's rivers and streams, threatening recreational opportunities, the health of fish populations, and community water supplies.

The Forest Service has a multi-billion dollar backlog in deferred road maintenance. Unfortunately, the administration's budget request for FY 2008 will only exacerbate the roads

problem by proposing a 31 percent cut in the Forest Service road maintenance and reducing road decommissioning by 307 miles – a 55 percent reduction from FY 2006.

Your support for the Legacy Roads Remediation Initiative would ensure that the Forest Service has critical resources available to properly prioritize road maintenance. The Roads Initiative would preserve access to our nation's forests while directing funds to roads that need maintenance and decommissioning unused and unwanted roads.

Road decommissioning is expensive, but, in the long run, the Forest Service estimates that road decommissioning would save taxpayers up to \$1,200 per mile in reduced maintenance costs annually. Additionally, each \$1 million spent on road decommissioning will support an estimated 11 direct jobs for heavy equipment operators and 3.5 jobs for other forest workers. The entire Roads Initiative would support roughly 940 direct jobs in forest communities. Furthermore, the Roads Initiative would improve water quality, enhance recreational opportunities, and improve road safety. A long term commitment to adequately maintaining National Forest roads would provide long term local and national economic and ecological benefits.

Please support efforts to reduce road impacts to watersheds and improve water quality through the Legacy Roads Remediation Initiative in the Interior appropriations process.

Sincerely,

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