

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

May 3, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 1791 (Rep. David Reichert)**, To establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the State of Washington, and for other purposes.
May 8, 2018, 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 1791, “Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Act”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 1791, introduced by Representative David G. Reichert (R-WA-08), establishes the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage area in the State of Washington and directs the Secretary of the Interior to designate a local unit of government, an Indian tribe, or a nonprofit organization to serve as the local coordinating entity for the heritage area. Once designated, the chosen entity will prepare and submit a management plan for the area.

Cosponsors

Rep. Adam Smith [D-WA-09], Rep. Suzan K. DelBene [D-WA-01], and Rep. Pramila Jayapal [D-WA-07]

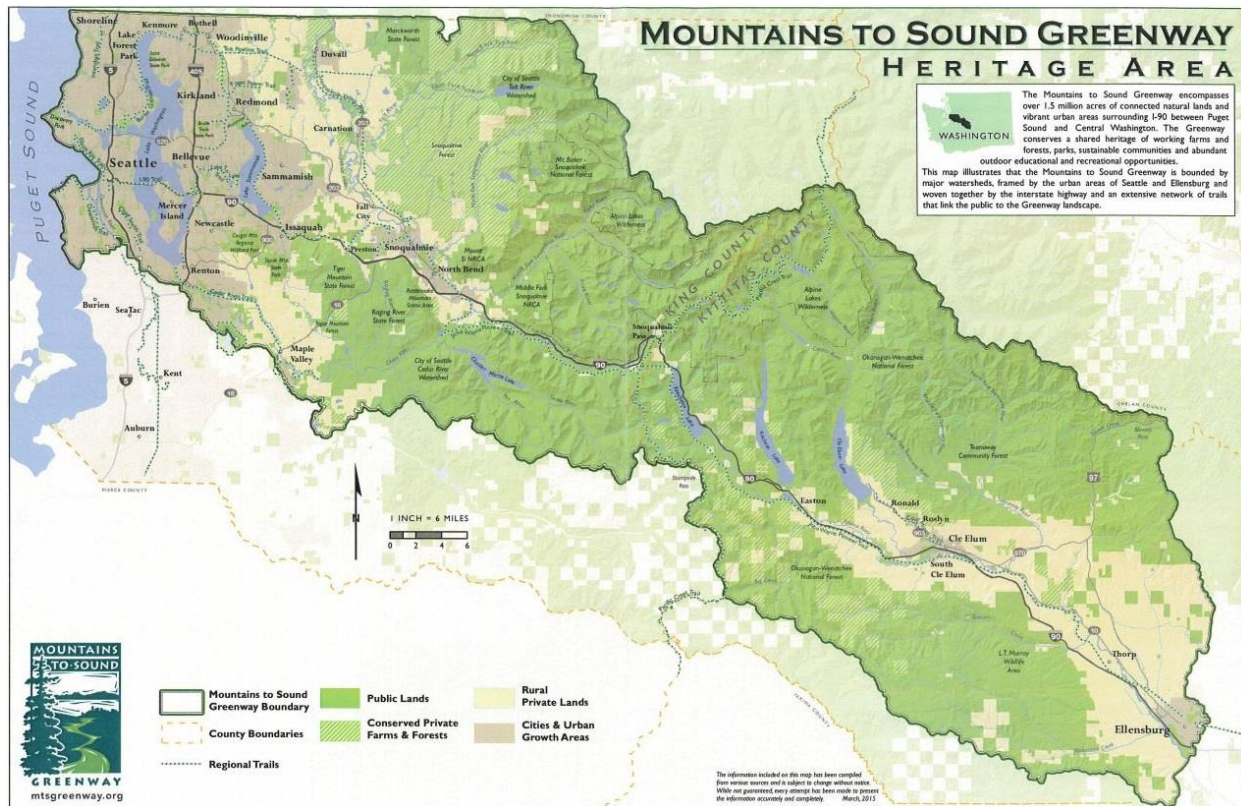
Background

Stretching 100 miles from the shores of Puget Sound to central Washington State, the Mountains to Sound Greenway conserves the scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and historic communities. The proposed area is diverse and has lands ranging from mountains, vast forests, high desert, suburban parks and gardens, to metropolitan streets.¹

The Greenway connects 1.5 million acres of urban and wild lands along Interstate 90. Over 900,000 acres of the land is publicly owned, ranging from city parks to expansive public forests. Another 100,000 acres are conserved as permanent private forests.²

¹ S. Rept. 114-317

² Mountains to Sound Greenway, About Us <https://mtsgreenway.org/about/>



In 1990, hundreds of citizens, led by members of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club, staged a march from Snoqualmie Pass to the Seattle waterfront. The march highlighted the need for conservation in the region to counter rapid urban expansion. In 1991, under civic leader Jim Ellis, the non-profit Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust was established. The Trust supports efforts to preserve open space, farms, working forests, and historic sites, and to create new trails, recreation and tourism opportunities along I-90. In the years since the Trust was established, the Mountains to Sound Greenway was designated as a Washington State Scenic Byway and in 1998 as a National Scenic Byway.³

In March 2012 the Trust completed an independent feasibility study regarding designation of the Mountains to Sound Greenway as a national heritage area. The study was reviewed by the National Park Service (NPS) and was found to not meet the NPS interim National Heritage Area Feasibility Guidelines. Subsequently, in May 2014, the Trust provided an addendum to the study which provide a revised statement of national importance, themes, a list of associated resources, a summary of traditions, customs, beliefs and folk life, and a boundary justification.

Legislation has been introduced in the House and the Senate since the 113th Congress to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area, and both the House and the

³ Washington State Department of Transportation, Mountains to Sound Greenway Scenic Byway. <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/ScenicByways/MountainsToSound.htm>

Senate have held legislative hearings on these proposals. The House Committee on Natural Resources favorably reported a similar bill, H.R. 1785, in the 113th Congress, and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has favorably reported bills in the 113th, 114th, and 115th Congresses.

H.R. 1791 would establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area and directs the Secretary of the Interior to designate a local unit of government, an Indian tribe, or a nonprofit organization to serve as the local coordinating entity for the heritage area. Once designated, the chosen entity will prepare and submit a management plan for the area.

As of April 2017, the Trust has collected 6,628 endorsements including the Governor of the State of Washington, the entire Washington Congressional delegation, county commissioners, city council members, local businesses, and non-profit organizations.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) has introduced similar companion legislation, S. 713. On June 26, 2017, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources favorably reported a modified version of S. 713, which included establishing language for several additional national heritage areas.

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1791 on April 11, 2018.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

On April 11, 2018 Ms. Joy Beasley, Acting Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science of the National Park Service, testified before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands on H.R. 1791:

The Department recognizes that the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area has been found to meet the National Park Service's interim criteria for designation as a national heritage area. However, in order to focus resources on reducing the National Park Service's \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical national park needs, funding for national heritage areas is not a priority in the Administration's FY 2019 budget. Under these circumstances, we believe it would be unwise to designate a new national heritage area at this time.⁴

Anticipated Amendments

⁴ Testimony of Ms. Joy Beasley, Acting Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science of the National Park Service before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/4.11_testimony_beasley.pdf

Congressman Bishop (R-UT) will offer an amendment to modify the definition of “tribe or tribal” to include the names of tribes located within the proposed national heritage area. The amendment will also add additional private property protections.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.