



November 19, 2009

## **H.R. 2781 Blocks Timber Production, Costing Jobs and Reducing Funds for Local Schools**

This week, the House will consider H.R. 2781, a bill to designate segments of the Molalla River in Oregon as components of the Wild and Scenic River Systems. As with all wild and scenic rivers, this designation could prevent full recreation use and economic development on this land, as well as potentially impact neighboring private property. Such designations preclude the ability to make future decisions without an act of Congress. There are many ways to protect and manage our rivers without imposing such absolute, permanent and inflexible mandates that do not allow us to adapt to new circumstances, evolving environmental science, and changing public needs and views.

Of specific concern is that this bill would block timber production on over 400 acres of land, resulting in lost job opportunities and reduced tax revenue for rural communities in Oregon where statewide unemployment has reached 11.5 percent, with it spiking even higher in timber-job dependent areas.

The timber industry provides a critical source of tax revenue for many Pacific Northwest communities that depend on it to fund schools, infrastructure projects and local services such as fire fighting. The Northwest's timber industry has already been hit hard by the current recession and locking up more timber land will only exacerbate the current economic crisis.

The Democrat sponsor of the bill, Rep. Kurt Schrader, recognized the negative economic impacts. On October 1, 2009, he testified before the House National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee: *"As the committee moves forward, I would ask the Chairman and Ranking Member to work with me and my staff to ensure there will be no net-loss of the acres available for timber management as a result of this legislation."*

Unfortunately, at Committee markup, the Democrat majority not only ignored Rep. Schrader's request, but blocked Republican efforts to offer an amendment requiring the Bureau of Land Management to designate new lands available for timber production to offset the loss of timber lands as a result of the bill. The Rules Committee has also blocked Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) from offering the same amendment on the House floor.

Without an amendment to offset lost timber land, this bill will cause further job loss and increased economic hardship.

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