

STATEMENT OF ROBERT ANDREW, PRESIDENT OF THE LONG BEACH MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION, PRESIDENT OF THE LONG BEACH LOYALTY DAYS AND OWNER OF THE COTTAGE BAKERY, LONG BEACH WASHINGTON, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, CONCERNING H. 5485, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING THE COLUMBIA-PACIFIC NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA IN THE STATES OF WASHINGTON AND OREGON.

September 7, 2006

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H. 5485. I and the communities I represent want to respectfully urge the House of Representatives to pass this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, for 30 years I have owned a small business in Long Beach, Pacific County, Washington State, that employs 16 people. I am a charter member and am currently president of the Long Beach Merchants Association that has 100 business members. I've also been an active board member for Pacific County Friends of Lewis and Clark, a group that was actively involved in supporting the creation of America's newest National Park – the Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Parks. Our community is thankful to Congress for passing the bill to create the Park, which has been a tremendous asset to our community. I am most proud to serve as the President of Long Beach Loyalty Day's, which celebrates patriotism and at 57 years is America's longest consecutively commemorated Loyalty Days celebration in the Nation, I am proud of the heritage of the people, industry and stunning scenic beauty that make the heritage of the Columbia Pacific Region unique.

I am here today to respectfully ask that Congress authorize a feasibility study to determine if a Columbia Pacific National Heritage Area should be established in the region where the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean.

I am here today representing more than 100 organizations, businesses and people within our communities that have voiced support or written to both the Washington and Oregon congressional delegation asking for the legislation. These supporters include; Port of Ilwaco, Port of Astoria, Port of the Peninsula, Washington State Historical Society, City of Long Beach, Clatsop County, Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, Ilwaco Merchants Association, Bank of Astoria, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Sentry Markets, Shorebank, Seaside Chamber of Commerce, Astoria Builders Supply, New Northwest Broadcasters, and the Governor of Oregon, among others.

The designation as a National Heritage Area is the gold standard, the premium brand, by which a region can be judged. I and the other community supporters believe the heritage of our region is of important significance that it will qualify for designation as a National Heritage Area. This, in turn will help us to attract entrepreneurs, business owners, families, and visitors to our region. This will help us continue to support sustainable economic development, create higher value cultural tourism and that allows us to not just preserve our heritage but also help it thrive.

This started as an idea talked about by a few community leaders. As we discussed this at Rotary Club's, at city council meetings, at Chamber of Commerce Board and Visitor Bureau's meetings, more and more people became excited about this concept, have worked to learn more and now want to go through the feasibility study process.

To my knowledge there has been no opposition or controversy over the idea of pursuing a feasibility study. However, one concern has been raised that I do share. This is concern that should the feasibility call for designating a heritage area, in the designation you and the other members of congress will ensure that private property rights and land use decisions remain at the local level. I have personally investigated this concern and I understand that you and other members of congress have included language in heritage area designations that provide this protection. From what I have seen and heard from other heritage areas I understand that congress has dealt with this concern and would do so in our case.

In conclusion, the communities in the Columbia Pacific Region are respectfully asking that Congress, both the House and Senate, pass this bill so that the President can sign it into law.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I will be pleased to answer any questions from members of the Committee.