

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman

Hearing Memorandum

April 6, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff — Terry Camp and Steven Parr
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **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.
April 11, 2018, 2:00 PM; 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, Indian tribe, or 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]

Witnesses

The Honorable David Reichert
Member of Congress, Washington’s 8th District

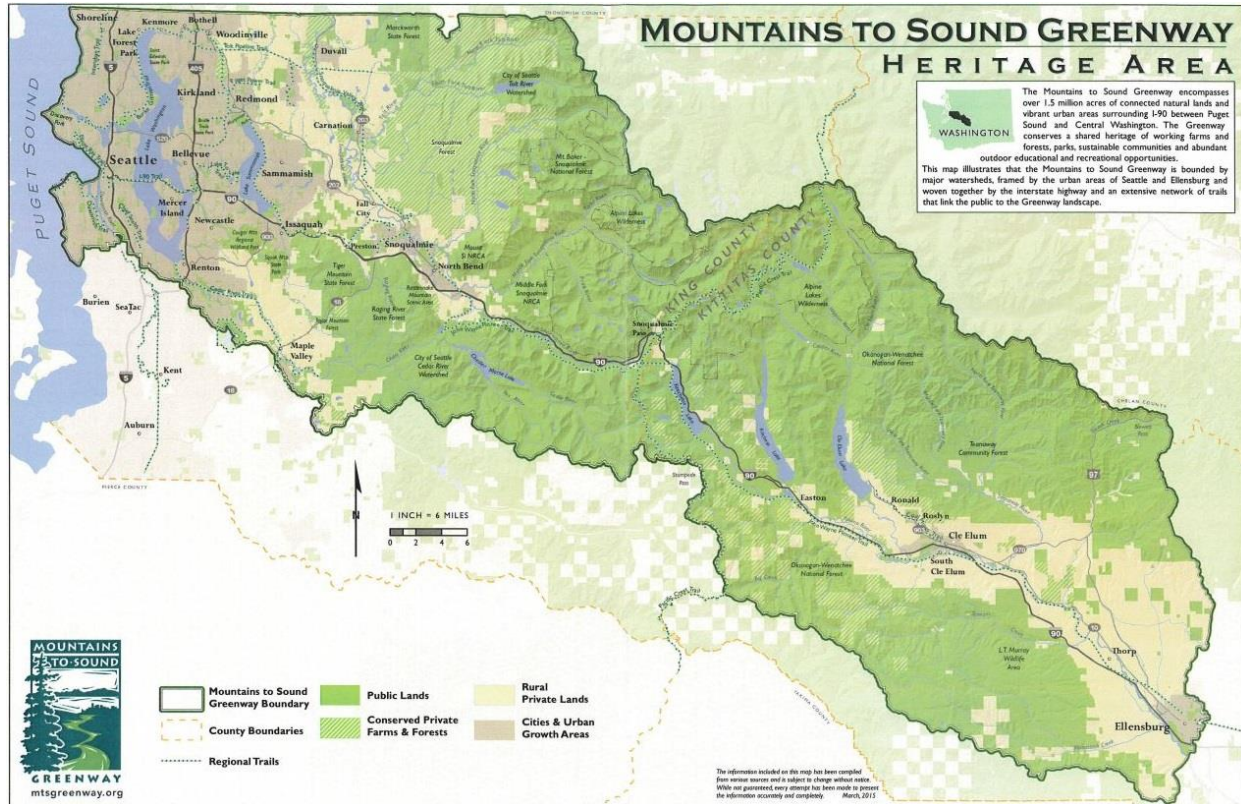
The Honorable Slade Gorton
Former Senator
Bellevue, WA

Background

Stretching 100 miles from the shores of Puget Sound to central Washington State, the Mountains to Sound Greenway conserves scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and historic communities. The proposed National Heritage 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



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 desire for expanded conservation in the region to coincide with expanded growth and development. In 1991, under civic leader Jim Ellis, the non-profit Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (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

¹ S. Rept. 114-317

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

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

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 and 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 Senate have held legislative hearings. Some have raised concerns that a national heritage designation could impact private property and water rights. However, 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 favorably reported bills authorizing this heritage area in the 113th, 114th, and 115th Congresses.⁴

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

A bill similar to H.R. 1791 has been introduced in the 115th Congress as S. 713 by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). In March 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.

Cost

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

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.

⁴ S. 2602 (113th Congress), S. 1690 (114th Congress), and S. 713 (115th Congress).