



Senator Maria Cantwell



Protecting Our Environment

Dear Friend,

This month we celebrate Earth Day, an annual opportunity to renew our dedication to protecting and conserving our environment. We Washingtonians are incredibly fortunate to live near so many pristine and beautiful public lands, and we in the Northwest have long known that protecting the environment and improving the economy go hand in hand, as our thriving outdoor recreation industry makes clear.

The author Wallace Stegner once called our national parks “the best idea America ever had.” Anyone who’s ever been to Mount Rainier, Olympic, or North Cascades National Parks, or some of our other incredible public lands in Washington state and around the country knows what he meant. That’s why I’m proud of my work to expand Mt. Rainier National Park, protect the White Salmon River, and create the new Wild Sky Wilderness Area.

Our region is also blessed with Puget Sound and miles of beautiful Pacific Ocean coastline. However, the U.S. Ocean Commission’s recently released report concludes that our nation’s oceans and coasts are in trouble and urges Congress to create a more coherent and science-based management system for our marine resources. I will work with my colleagues to enact these reforms so that we can protect Washington state shores, as well as marine life like orcas and salmon that make our region the special place we all love.

Conservation of our parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands need not be a partisan issue. The majestic herd of Roosevelt Elk in Olympic National Park is a fitting reminder that throughout the past century, Republicans and Democrats have been able to come together to preserve our nation’s public lands.

Unfortunately, however, we also face many challenges. I’ve fought efforts by the current Administration to weaken our environmental laws. Also, Washington state has a history of industrial activities that have left a legacy of toxic pollution. From the Spokane River, to Lake Roosevelt, and Puget Sound, we have many contaminated sites that must be cleaned up. We also must address the global challenge of climate change, which poses a unique threat to the Pacific Northwest and our way of life. I look forward to working with my fellow members of our state’s congressional delegation and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the Senate to address these issues, and protect our natural treasures and public health.

Best wishes,

Maria Cantwell

“Green” Business Means Black Ink for the Bottom Line

A great example of how we can simultaneously protect the environment while boosting the economy is transitioning to a clean energy system based on renewable and efficient energy technologies. Last week, Rep. Jay Inslee and I sponsored a forum in Seattle on the New Apollo Energy Project. The Apollo Energy vision, inspired by President Kennedy’s challenge to the nation to put a man on the moon within a decade, is the idea that a massive investment in clean energy technologies can simultaneously create millions of high-paying manufacturing jobs, greatly reduce the environmental impact of energy use, and relieve our dependence on foreign energy.

One of the forum presenters – University of California,

Berkeley, Professor Daniel Kammen – released a report that shows how investments in clean, renewable energy solutions will create more jobs than comparable investments in fossil fuel. The report found that, per unit of energy, the renewable energy sector generates more jobs than the fossil fuel-based energy sector. It also found that every state, especially Washington, stands to gain in net employment from clean energy policies at the federal level.

I believe that Washington state, with its highly skilled and technologically savvy workforce, is uniquely suited to be a leader in the clean energy market. In fact, the Northwest already has a \$1.4 billion per year clean energy industry, and it’s on track to grow to \$2.5 billion over the next 20 years, creating more than 12,000 new jobs in our region. By exploring wind, solar, biomass, and other clean energy alternatives to fossil fuels, I believe we’ll find that taking the clean route can benefit both our environment and our economy.

Expanding protection of our wild places

We in Washington state are fortunate to live in such remarkable natural surroundings. Our wild lands serve many important functions: they are premiere recreational destinations, economic engines for nearby communities, and important habitat for fish and wildlife. I am committed to conserving these pristine areas that make our state special, and preserving these public lands for future generations of Washingtonians to enjoy. I would like to take this opportunity give you a few specific examples.

Mt. Rainier National Park. Perhaps the crown jewel of all of our magnificent public lands is Mount Rainier. I recently announced my plan to introduce a bill in the Senate for the largest expansion of Mount Rainier National Park in more than 70 years. My bill will extend the park's northwestern boundary for three miles along the Carbon River, adding about 800 acres to the park. In addition to protecting priceless wild places for future generations, the expansion will improve visitor access, create new lowland hiking trails, and save taxpayers money that will no longer be needed to repair a frequently washed out road. I'm also pleased that the current landowners helped develop this proposal, and that it has their enthusiastic support.

This bill will also make Mt. Rainier safer and more accessible for families and outdoor enthusiasts by creating a new reliable campsite along the Carbon River, which will be a boost for our regional economy, too. Reliable access to campsites attracts more visitors, who buy gas, food, and pay for other services in surrounding communities. I'm glad that other members of our state's congressional delegation support protecting this area, and I look forward to working with them to see it passed.

Wild Sky Wilderness. I'm also proud of our delegation's team effort to bring the proposed Wild Sky Wilderness closer to reality. In the Senate, the Wild Sky bill passed last year. Its easy passage is a testament to the hard work that has gone into this bipartisan and popular bill. Designation of this wilderness area in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest would protect wildlife and promote clean water, protect threatened salmon, steelhead and trout, protect recreational opportunities for the region, and contribute to the local economy.

The proposed Wild Sky Wilderness area is the result of more than three years of bipartisan collaboration, community involvement, and hard work, led by Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Rick Larsen. I co-sponsored the Wild Sky Wilderness Act and helped to clear the bill through the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on which I serve. It passed the Senate last year, and it's now up to the House to pass this bill. I'll keep working with my House colleagues to see it finally passed and signed into law.

White Salmon River. Last year, I introduced legislation in the Senate to protect the magnificent White Salmon River, in Southwest Washington. My bill, which complements legislation offered by Rep. Brian Baird in the House of Representatives, will grant "Wild and Scenic" status to the upper reaches of the White Salmon and one of its tributaries, Cascade Creek. By designating it part of the Wild and Scenic River System, we can ensure that this special river will always remain in its natural state.

The White Salmon River's remarkable beauty and pristine condition are not in question. In fact, the lower eight miles of the river received protection when Congress granted that stretch of the river "Wild and Scenic" status in 1986. As we saw then, its protected status hasn't prevented residents and visitors from taking advantage of the unique recreational opportunities the White Salmon River offers. Extending "Wild and Scenic" protection to the river's upper reaches is an important step forward in protecting even more of its wild character for fishing, boating, and other recreational activities.



*The Carbon River valley and Mount Rainier view from Mowich Lake turnoff road.
Photo courtesy: National Park Service*

Lewis and Clark National Historic Park.

I support protecting sites and expanding public spaces along the Columbia River at sites that played a unique role in American history. In March, I introduced a bill to protect several sites in Washington state which are significant to Lewis and Clark's historic Corps of Discovery. My bill will designate two new sites known as Clark's Dismal Notch and Station Camp as part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park. With bipartisan support from Sen. Gordon Smith, Sen. Patty Murray and Sen. Ron Wyden, I am confident that the bill will move forward this year, in time for these parks to be enjoyed by the million-plus visitors expected at the November 2005 bicentennial celebrations.

Protecting Roadless Areas of our National Forests

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, adopted by the U.S. Forest Service three years ago, provides the appropriate balance between conserving important habitat for fish and wildlife in inventoried roadless areas and allowing resource activities in other areas of our National Forests. That's why I'm proud to be the primary sponsor of S. 1200, a bill which would codify the rule into law. Unfortunately, news reports indicate that the Bush Administration is considering weakening the roadless rule. I was glad that more than twenty of my fellow Senators signed a letter I wrote to the President urging him to keep the roadless rule in place.

In addition to protecting fish and wildlife habitat, the roadless rule helps ensure continued opportunities for outdoor recreation in roadless areas by conserving those lands for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities, which generate significant economic benefits. Conserving roadless areas also helps to protect our nation's watersheds and to ensure clean drinking water for millions of Americans. Most importantly, the conservation of 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas will



Sen. Cantwell receives an award from Mike Petersen of the Lands Council for her advocacy of the environment and human health

ensure that future generations of Americans will have the opportunity to use and enjoy these lands.

As currently written for the lower 48 states, the roadless rule provides the U.S. Forest Service with the necessary flexibility to conduct hazardous fuels reduction activities to protect forest health and rural communities and to build new roads in order to protect public safety within inventoried roadless areas. In addition, when developing the rule, the U.S. Forest Service conducted the most extensive and thorough public process in the agency's history.

Defending the Tongass National Forest and the Arctic National Wildlife

Washington state residents have long had an affinity with Alaska. Senator Scoop Jackson led the effort to pass the Alaska Lands Act in 1980. That's why I've fought to prevent the Administration from rolling back protections on the Tongass National Forest and

I am proud that the U.S. Senate has held the line on maintaining the ban on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). I believe we can greatly reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but I believe we can do so with American ingenuity and a commitment to more efficient automobiles.

For example, automakers commonly use low-friction tires on new cars to help them comply with fuel economy standards. However, because there are no standards or efficiency labels for replacement tires, most consumers unwittingly purchase less efficient tires when their originals wear out, even though low-friction tires would only cost a few dollars more per tire and would save the average driver \$100 worth of fuel over the 40,000-mile life of the tires. Fully phased in, better replacement tires would cut gasoline consumption of all U.S. vehicles by about 3 percent, saving our nation over 5 billion barrels of oil over the next 50 years – the same amount the United States Geological Survey says could be economically recovered

from ANWR. I'm developing legislation with Sen. Chuck Schumer to encourage this innovative approach.

Drilling in the Arctic would mark a major reversal in America's 100-year commitment to conservation. Drilling in the refuge would violate our duty as responsible stewards of the Arctic Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System as a whole – which are among our most valuable national treasures. Protecting the coastal plain will benefit wildlife, the native Gwich'in people, and one of America's last great wilderness landscapes.

Although we have been able to halt the proposal to drill in the Arctic during the 108th Congress, this fight will continue. I'll keep standing up to protect these natural treasures.

Safeguarding Orcas and Marine Wildlife

I am glad that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has come forward with a joint U.S. – Canadian plan to reunite the young orca, Luna, with his pod. Luna's behavior in isolated Nootka Sound has been erratic, endangering himself and nearby boaters. This is clearly an unsustainable situation and I am pleased that we are committing our best efforts to reuniting Luna with his fellow Southern Resident orcas.

Reuniting Luna with his pod will have much greater significance than simply protecting one endangered mammal and strengthening the population of one group of resident orcas. By fitting Luna with a tracking tag, scientists will be able to learn much about orcas' movement and migration patterns – a subject that is still largely unclear to researchers even after decades of study. This

information, in turn, can help us do a better job of protecting all orcas.

Sen. Warren Magnuson once described these magnificent creatures as "Puget Sound's most unique living natural resource." But this is a critical time for orcas, and in a sense, Luna's plight is symbolic of the plight of all Northwest orcas. In early April, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission added our region's killer whales to the state's list of endangered species, and the Southern Resident population is also being considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. That's why I was pleased to secure \$1.5 million last year to continue a multi-year research plan to discover what factors have contributed to the alarming decline to our region's beloved killer whales.

Making the grade

I'm proud to report that a number of groups have given my work on behalf of the environment top marks. The American Wilderness Coalition, for example, recently announced its report card evaluating the votes and positions of members of Congress for the first half of the 108th Congress. I was one of just seven Senators to receive an A+ from the group. Sen. Murray also received top marks, and as a result, Washington state is the only state to have both its Senators receive an A+. I also received a 100 percent rating – the highest possible rating – from the League of Conservation Voters. Last month, I was honored to receive the Water Watch award from Eastern Washington's Lands Council for my advocacy of the environment and human health. I'm gratified to have the support of these groups, which are great advocates for the environment.



A trio of Southern Resident orcas from J pod near Spieden Island. Photo by: David Ellifrit, Center for Whale Research, and courtesy of Orca Network.

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