



October 14, 2016

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Expansion

Dear Senator Merkley,

We are truly blessed to live in an area with an abundance of natural beauty all around us. This includes the numerous natural resources available everywhere you look. We are not only fortunate to enjoy this but our economic survival is dependent on the ability to wisely use these natural resources.

The “normal” now seems to be big government over-regulating rural communities whether it is timber, wolves, mining, spotted owl, sage grouse, control of our abundant water resource and the list just keeps getting longer and longer. There already exist many layers of Government regulations to “protect” Public Land that is “managed” by government.

As a citizen and as a Klamath County Commissioner, I have consistently opposed this ever increasing over-reach from our State and Federal Government. I understand this is still a “proposal” but very recently the Federal Government has been very active in their attempts to create new and enlarge areas already designated as a Monument. The 2.1 million acre Owyhee Canyonlands, the 500,000-acre Crater Lake Wilderness Area and now the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument expansion, are just some of the recent attempts to advance this gigantic over-reach in our area.

If this proposal moves forward, the economic impact will be devastating for Klamath County and our neighbors, Jackson and Siskiyou County. The negative end result could be reducing local staff and physical footprint or more likely completely shutting down the entire Klamath Falls office. The annual budget for the local BLM office exceeds \$3 million. The loss of nearly 60 well-paying jobs, **and their families**, along with the negative effects to all the associated local providers such as leased facilities, suppliers of goods and services and all the services required to

sustain the current workforce, would be devastating. The total direct and indirect negative financial impact to Klamath County would easily exceed \$5 million annually.

There are approximately 53,100 acres in this specific proposal. O&C Lands make up approximately 50,900 acres. Of the 53,100 acres, approximately 19,000 acres are within Klamath County. Even looking at this as a proposal, goes against the very spirit of the O&C Act.

There would also be a major loss of grazing permits, which support our local agriculture base. The loss of timber sales, approximately 6 million board feet per year, along with the loss of timber revenues to all the O&C Counties and all the associated family wage jobs adds yet another layer of economic devastation for all affected Counties.

Reasonable access to "public land", is becoming a thing of the past, especially for those with a physical handicap. And in some areas of public land, who among us can actually decipher the bag full of maps required to even attempt to know you if you are violating the law, by being on a "closed" road.

A simple equation may vividly show the environmental devastation as follows: less accessible, usable timber land=fewer staff=less if any timber sales=little if any forest management=many catastrophic wild fires=death of residents, death of fire fighters, death of wildlife and an ever increasing "scorched" landscape left behind.

This entire process of continually locking up more and more land each and every year, is making an excellent argument to seriously consider turning over management of these "public lands" to the local jurisdictions.

It may sound nice to have millions upon millions of acres set aside for visitors to come and view from a distance, but **WE** live here. This is often times our backyard. This is where many of our citizens make their living, go hunting and fishing, cut firewood and just plain enjoy the pure beauty of our local surroundings.

These "proposals" needs to die, and the quicker the better.

Sincerely,



Tom Mallams
Commissioner