

STATEMENT

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**BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS
MAY 15, 2007**

CONCERNING

S. 1057, NEW RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ACT OF 2007

S. 1281, SNAKE HEADWATERS LEGACY ACT OF 2007

**H.R. 247, DESIGNATION OF “JIM WEAVER LOOP TRAIL,”
WILLAMETTE NATIONAL FOREST**

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Department of Agriculture on these bills: S. 1057, New River Wild and Scenic River Act of 2007; S. 1281, Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2007; and H.R. 247, which designates a Forest Service trail in the Willamette National Forest as a National Recreation Trail in honor of Jim Weaver, a former member of the House of Representatives.

S. 1057, New River Wild and Scenic River Act of 2007

S. 1057, New River Wild and Scenic River Act of 2007, amends section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) to designate a segment of the New River in the States of Virginia and North Carolina as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The segment to be designated by S. 1057 is immediately downstream of the portion of the New River added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by the Secretary of the Interior through Section 2(a)(ii) in 1976. It is located entirely off National Forest System land, approximately 7 miles from the Jefferson National Forest in Virginia and 40 miles north of the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina.

The Department does not support the designation of this segment of the New River as a component of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System without first reviewing or analyzing the river segment to determine its eligibility and suitability for designation. Accordingly, the Department does support the designation of this segment as a study river under section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This study designation affords the river protection from the adverse impacts of federally assisted water resources projects and

from the sale of any federal lands within the one-half mile study river corridor. It also requires the appropriate Secretary to provide conditions to safeguard the area in any mineral leasing of federal lands, and directs all federal agencies to protect river values in actions they propose within or adjacent to the study river corridor. These protections would remain in effect for a three-year period following the transmittal of the final study report from the President to the Congress, regardless of the study's finding.

S. 1281, Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2007

S. 1281, Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2007, amends section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) to designate segments of the Snake River system in the State of Wyoming as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Department supports S. 1281 with several technical corrections, and defers to the Department of the Interior in regard to the portions of the bill that designate the segments that flow through lands administered by the National Park Service.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest contains the headwaters of the Snake River; the majority of the tributaries to the Snake River segment below Jackson Lake, Pacific Creek and Buffalo Fork and its tributaries, and the entire Blackrock Creek tributary; the majority of the Gros Ventre River and the entirety of its Crystal Creek tributary; and, the two sections of the Hoback River, and its principal tributaries, Granite, Shoal, Cliff and Willow Creeks, and the Snake River from the confluence of the Hoback River to Palisades Reservoir, including Bailey and Wolf Creeks.

All of the river segments on National Forest System land have been found to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

These rivers are free-flowing and provide outstanding scenery and recreational opportunities. Many flow through important geologic areas and support diverse populations of aquatic and wildlife species, including Yellowstone native cutthroat trout and grizzly bear.

We recommend the definition of “Secretary concerned” in section 3(1) and the requirement that each river segment be managed by the Secretary concerned in section 5(a) be clarified so that those proposed segments that form the boundary between national park and national forest system lands

are clearly assigned to one or the other Secretary. In addition we recommend that section 5(b) be eliminated, as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act includes direction to develop a comprehensive management plan within three full fiscal years and specifies its contents. We would be pleased to work with the Subcommittee to address these and other technical corrections.

H.R. 247, designation of the “Jim Weaver Loop Trail,” Willamette National Forest

H.R. 247 would designate a 19.6 mile trail known as Trail 3590, the Waldo Lake Loop, on the Willamette National Forest as a national recreation trail in honor of Jim Weaver, former member of the House of Representatives from Oregon. The trail would be a component of the National Trails System and would be renamed the “Jim Weaver Loop Trail.” The bill would also authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to prepare, install, and maintain an interpretive sign honoring the life and career of Congressman Jim Weaver.

The Department supports enactment of this legislation to honor former Representative Jim Weaver.

This concludes my prepared statement and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.