

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

March 31, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I recently wrote to you in support of your Executive Order establishing a national goal to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. I recognize that to achieve this important goal, we will need collaboration from all impacted stakeholders, including Tribes, States, local governments, commercial fishermen, and recreation enthusiasts who enjoy access to America's lands and waters.

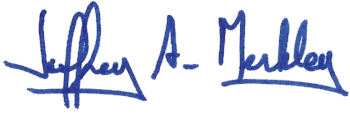
For many of these stakeholders, conserving our shared environment will directly impact their lives and livelihoods. I urge you to pursue a transparent, stakeholder-driven process through which the federal government listens and incorporates meaningful feedback as it works to conserve and protect our environment.

I was pleased to see the request for information issued by the Department of Commerce in March 2021 soliciting feedback on creating more resilient fisheries and protecting resources from the impacts of climate change. I urge you to continue and expand on these efforts to ensure that stakeholders are meaningfully and frequently engaged throughout this process as your Administration works to achieve all the objectives described in the Executive Order. It is crucial that you engage with these stakeholders from the very beginning of the process as you work to define the scope of protected areas and as you consider details regarding which areas within our public lands and waters should be conserved. Our community stakeholders hold invaluable knowledge about our public lands and waters and the process and outcome will benefit greatly from their consultation.

Many of these stakeholders have learned and practiced the importance of safeguarding our natural resources for generations. A thorough stakeholder engagement process is a unique opportunity to learn best practices, needs, and challenges from groups on the ground that are already deeply engaged in this work. For example, fishermen in Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest are committed to improving the health of the ocean and the strength of our blue economy in the years ahead. They and other groups must have a seat at the table to share their experience and to be part of the solution that protects our environment and the livelihoods of the people who depend on it.

I ask that you grant them that engagement and stand ready to support your Administration in carrying out this necessary goal to protect our natural environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Merkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator