

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 4, 2016

Secretary Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

We are writing to request you or your designee's participation in a public meeting in the Ashland area to discuss potential expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. The meeting is scheduled to take place on October 14th in Ashland, the closest town to the Monument.

As you may recall, the Oregon Senators sent a letter to your office in August highlighting the unique biological diversity of the region and urging you to visit the area and speak with local citizens. The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument has protected some of the most biodiverse public land in the United States. It is an ecological crossroads in an area of unique geology, biology, climate, and iconic American landscapes – the place where the volcanoes of the Cascade Range, the ridges and valleys of the Basin and Range Province, and the world-renowned biodiversity of the Klamath-Siskiyou mountain block come together. The monument also benefits small towns in the area by boosting recreation and tourism that assist the local economy.

However, mounting pressures on adjacent and nearby public lands, combined with the increasing effects of climate change, have scientists convinced that the original June 2000 boundaries are no longer adequate to protect the native species and habitats the monument was established to protect – and they urge expansion of the monument's boundaries.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the potential expansion of the Monument should the President choose to do so. Most importantly, the meeting will allow people to express support for or concerns about expanding the monument, and to comment on the specifics of how it might be expanded.

To help promote dialogue in the meeting we have attached a map showing some of the public lands scientists recommend for expanding the monument, as well as conservation designations proposed in legislation introduced by the Oregon Senators. These proposals intend to better provide protections to critical watersheds, and terrestrial habitats, and also to a wider range of elevations that are especially important as species seek to adapt to climate change.

The vast majority of the approximately 50,000-acre expansion proposed by scientists is on BLM land in Oregon, which has strong backing from elected officials, citizens, chambers of commerce, conservationists, and local landowners. About 5,000 acres of BLM land in California has additionally been recommended for inclusion – much of it already dedicated to wildlife protection in some fashion. And, as you know, only Federal public land inside expanded monument boundaries would become monument land. As with the existing monument, private land inside outer monument boundaries stays private.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you toward an expanded Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator