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February 5, 2008

Columbia River Gorge Commission
P.O. Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672

Dear Commissioners,

As a life-long resident of the Columbia River Gorge (Gorge) and someone who represents much of the Oregon side of the Gorge in the United States House of Representatives, I respectfully submit the following comments for the record regarding the proposed Recreation Resort Plan amendment to the Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA).

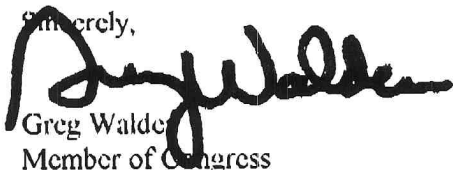
As you are well aware, the proposed amendment would create new policies and guidelines to enable the revitalization of an existing industrial area, commonly known as Broughton Mill. I support the comments submitted by my colleagues, Senator Patty Murray (WA) and Congressman Brian Baird (WA), in support of the Commission adopting a plan amendment that allows for economically viable and successful redevelopment while protecting and enhancing the CRGNSA. I also support the report by the CRGNSA Director Jill Arens recommending adoption of the proposed amendment.

Since the designation of the CRGNSA, I have witnessed a shift in the economy away from timber-based jobs into tourism and recreation. This change was not only predicted by supporters and opponents of the original NSA designation, but also advocated by many who sought its passage in Congress. Indeed advocates of the Act offered Gorge residents the promise of more tourism and more recreational opportunities and jobs. While the area has seen more of both, it often lags economically with lower wage jobs and higher cost housing. Meanwhile, the federal government's refusal to keep its commitment to timbered counties by reauthorizing and funding the county payments legislation threatens real hardship on basic services provided by local governments.

Proponents also said that redevelopment of old mill sites would provide additional economic opportunities. As I understand it, this is exactly the situation before you now: a chance to allow redevelopment of a closed mill site to enable a rural area to take advantage of a new economic opportunity and create new jobs.

I encourage the Commission to adopt a plan that will allow redevelopment of the Broughton Mill industrial site to enable the project to be economically viable and environmentally sound. Thank you for your time in considering my perspective and please do not hesitate to contact me, or my staff member Colby Marshall (541-624-2400), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Walden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Greg Walden
Member of Congress