

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

Chairman

Subcommittee on Research and Science Education

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BRIAN BAIRD
 CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
 3RD DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

January 16, 2008

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Commissioner Paul Pearce
 Skamania County
 P.O. Box 790
 Stevenson, WA 98648

Dear Paul:

We write to thank you for agreeing to serve on the Mount St. Helens Citizen Advisory Committee. Your dedication to this important issue will help ensure that together we can make the best possible decision for the future of the Monument.

As you know, Mount St. Helens has encountered many challenges in recent years, including limited funding, damage to roads impacting accessibility, the closure of Coldwater Visitor Center, and proposed development around the Monument. Concerns about continued access to the area for hunting and recreational purposes are also prevalent. Certainly, we must consider how to address these challenges and concerns as we work to ensure that the volcano most adequately meets the needs of our region.

The goal of the advisory committee is to explore the community's vision for the Monument's future. It is our hope that after considering all of the facts available you will make an informed recommendation regarding the best course of action for ensuring that Mount St. Helens remains a key tourist destination and economic engine for the area while preserving its natural resources and allowing it to remain a world leader for scientific research. While you will ultimately be responsible for determining who is invited to speak to the Advisory Committee, we strongly encourage you to consider inviting representatives from possible management agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, interested recreational and environmental groups, and impacted businesses. We would further encourage you as a committee to allow comments from the general public during some or all of your meetings. We have great confidence in the committee's ability to consider this issue with an open mind and its collective ability to discern the information provided in making its formal recommendations to us as federal lawmakers.

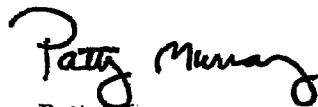
Our intent is for our role with the Advisory Committee to be limited. While we will likely send representatives to the meetings, we want to ensure that the Advisory Committee is as independent as possible. We expect that the committee will arrive at its own recommendations

on its own schedule. However, our offices are available to provide assistance to the committee as needed, particularly as it relates to obtaining information from federal agencies.

Attached is a contact sheet of the committee members for your reference. We have asked each of the three County Commissions to appoint one Commissioner to act as co-chairs of the committee and to alternate hosting the meetings in their respective counties. We expect that the first committee meeting will be convened in late winter or early spring.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this important and dynamic process. We will be in touch after the first of the year with further details. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Kimberly Blake Pincheira with Congressman Baird's office at 360.695.6292 or Bob Dingethal with Senator Cantwell's office at 360.696.7838.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Brian Baird
Member of Congress



Norm Dicks
Member of Congress