House on Track to Pass Public Lands Package -- Includes Cantwell Measures

Local News

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Today, the House of Representatives is on track to pass the Public Lands Package; it will then be sent to President Obama who has indicated he will sign it into law. The package includes many provisions secured by Sen. Cantwell that will benefit WA state.

Key components of Cantwell's package: **Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act:** Creates a comprehensive national ocean acidification research and monitoring program that will take a hard look at the devastating impacts greenhouse gas emissions are having on our oceans. The world's oceans are absorbing roughly 22 million tons of carbon dioxide *every day*, causing seawater chemistry to become more acidic - possibly withholding the basic chemical building blocks needed by many marine organisms. Warmer, more acidic oceans can destroy important fisheries and food chains in the Pacific Ocean, impacting Pacific Northwest icons like Pacific Salmon. Understanding ocean acidification is critical to Washington state's marine life and economy that depends on it. **Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act:** Develops and maintains an integrated system of ocean and coastal observations for the nation's coasts, oceans and Great Lakes. This system could help improve warnings of tsunamis and other natural hazards, enhance homeland security, support maritime operations, and help scientists understand more about our fragile ocean environment. **Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Act:** Establishes a coastal and estuarine land protection program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to protect coastal areas with significant ecological, recreational, or watershed protection values that are threatened by human development, and administers grants to coastal states for acquiring coastal land for conservation and recreational purposes. **Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Act:** Designates the 1,200 mile Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail as a National Scenic Trail and will promote its protection and maintenance. National Scenic Trails provide recreation, conservation, and delight of significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities. The 1,200 mile Trail, running from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean, ranks among the most scenic trails in the world. The trail includes the Rocky Mountains, Selkirk Mountains, Pasayten Wilderness, North Cascades, Olympic Mountains, and Wilderness Coast and crosses three national parks and seven national forests. The Trail has received National Recreation Trail status in the three national parks it crosses (Olympic, North Cascades, and Glacier) and has also received Millennium status from the Clinton Administration. **Snoqualmie Pass Land Conveyance Act:** Allows the Snoqualmie Pass Fire District to acquire an acre and a half of Forest Service land to build a new fire station that will support neighboring communities and address safety and security needs, while helping to preserve the environment. For decades, the Fire District has operated out of an aging building that was not originally designed to be a fire station and is structurally inadequate to meet the growing emergency response needs at the Pass. **Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail Designation Act**: Creates an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail through portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana to tell the story of how a series of monumental floods created the unique geology of Central and Eastern Washington and boost regional tourism. The trail would be managed by the National Park Service in partnership with the Ice Age Floods Institute, participating states, tribes, and other local entities. Interpretive centers, signs

and markers, exhibits, waysides, and roadside pullouts would be used to tell the story of the floods, provide educational opportunities, and help enhance regional tourism. **Wildland Firefighter Safety:** To improve the accountability of the federal agencies that administer safety and training programs, Cantwell's legislation would require the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to jointly submit a report on the implementation and efficacy of these programs. The report must describe steps federal firefighting agencies are taking to make sure contract firefighters receive the same training as federal firefighters. The legislation would also require a system to track the money spent on wildland firefighter safety and training.