

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bentz:

We are writing to express our strong support for conserving Sutton Mountain and surrounding public lands in the John Day River Basin. Our members appreciate and enjoy this area for its incredible hiking, birdwatching, fishing, hunting and other recreation opportunities.

Sutton Mountain is part of the largest contiguous expanse of public lands in central Oregon and provides essential habitat for a surprising diversity of flora and fauna. Pronghorn, mule deer and elk roam this incredible landscape, while golden eagles can be spotted overhead and thousands of songbirds flitter about ample riparian and upland communities. Meanwhile, Bridge Creek and its tributaries provide critical habitat for threatened Mid-Columbia River steelhead trout, where years of private investment and volunteer restoration projects have helped to bolster steelhead recovery.

There aren't many places like Sutton Mountain in the West, which is why protecting this landscape is so important. Specially designating these public lands would help to conserve fish and wildlife resources, provide for countless recreational opportunities on the landscape, and support sustainable economic development in the City of Mitchell and Wheeler County.

Thank you for your consideration of current proposals to protect Sutton Mountain.

Sincerely,

Sophia Kaelke
Oregon Engagement Manager
Trout Unlimited

Ian Isaacson & Chris Hager
Co-Chairs, Oregon Chapter
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Michael O'Casey
Pacific Northwest Region Deputy Director
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Ryan Houston
Executive Director
Oregon Natural Desert Association

David Moskowitz
Executive Director
The Conservation Angler