

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

January 22, 2016

Jerome E. Perez, State Director
Oregon and Washington State Office
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

Dear State Director Perez:

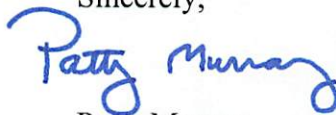
I write regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) ongoing efforts to review the Goat Mountain Hard Rock Prospecting Permit Applications Modified Environmental Assessment (EA). Your work on this issue has generated great interest among my constituents in Washington state, and I request a 60-day extension of the deadline for public comments on the EA.

I understand that notification regarding the modified EA was published in The Columbian newspaper on January 5, 2016, which initiated a 30 day comment period, which will close on February 4, 2016. I appreciate the effort your agency made to notify interested parties via postcards, but am concerned that many interested parties, including several who commented on the original EA, did not receive notice.

The area in which the proposed exploratory drilling would occur provides unique benefits to my constituents. For example, some of the land was purchased by the U.S. Forest Service using funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which as you know was established over fifty years ago, in part to help the federal government acquire land for conservation and recreation purposes. In the shadow of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, the Green River valley is used by hunters, anglers, horseback riders, and hikers, all of which could be impacted by exploratory drilling. The Green River also provides important habitat for salmon and steelhead species on the endangered species list and is a source for drinking and agricultural water uses for downstream communities.

An extension of the comment period to the full 90 days allowed by federal regulations would ensure interested stakeholders have ample opportunity to examine potential impacts and generate comprehensive comments regarding the proposal. Thank you for your attention to this request. I look forward to working with you to ensure my constituents have the opportunity to provide thoughtful feedback on the modified EA covering exploratory drilling on Goat Mountain.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator