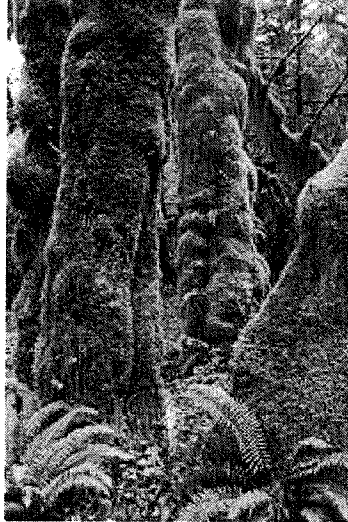


**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 18, 2011



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**National Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2011**  
*Protecting our Natural Heritage and America's Great Outdoors*

Dear Colleague:

National Forest roadless areas protect air and water quality, preserve biodiversity, and ensure opportunities for recreation. The rapid pace of development, particularly in the West, is putting increased demands on our national forests placing our roadless lands at risk to industrial exploration and other destructive activities. These new and continuing threats would put drinking water for 60 million Americans at risk, damage fish and wildlife habitat and compromise outdoor recreation and the billions of dollars in revenue it generates annually.

The National Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2011 will ensure that we conserve 58.5 million acres of pristine wild forests for future generations by codifying the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was issued in January of 2001, after more than two decades of debate and the most extensive public involvement process in federal rulemaking history. To date, the U.S. Forest Service has received over 4.2 million comments on the roadless rule with the vast majority in support of the rule's protections.

This legislation provides critical and balanced protections for these lands in a time when their ecological and social values are being threatened. Additionally, this legislation is in response to an overwhelming public support to protect our national forests. Like the original Roadless Rule, this legislation is science-based, balanced conservation policy and reflects the value that Americans place on these untouched public lands. It is not a complete ban on road building, road reconstruction or economic utilization. For instance the legislation:

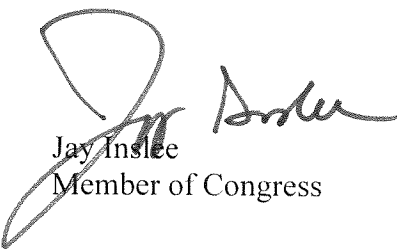
- Allows new roads to be constructed in specified circumstances, such as to fight fires or when other natural events threaten public health and safety,
- Does not close any existing roads or trails and allows full access for recreational activities such as backpacking, camping, hunting and fishing, and off-road vehicle use;
- Does not affect the right of access to (private) property owned by states or individuals,
- Allows logging of certain timber to reduce the risk of wildfires, and
- Allows for expansion of oil and gas operations within existing or renewed leased areas.

The fate of this country's last remaining wild forests is an issue of great importance for all Americans and has great ramifications for the nation's economy, scenery, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and quality of life. They also provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat for more than 1,600 threatened or endangered plant and animal species and generate a significant portion the outdoor industry's \$730 billion in revenues and 6.5 million jobs, each year. Additionally, protecting roadless areas is fiscally responsible as it allows the U.S. Forest Service to address the estimated \$10 billion backlog in needed road maintenance instead of using taxpayer dollars to subsidize new roads.

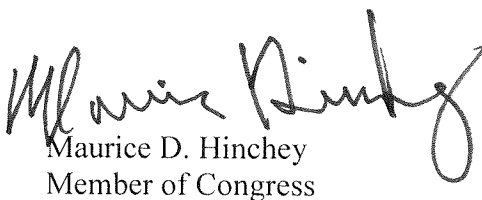
Congress has a long track record of support for protecting America's national forests. With the safeguards afforded to these public lands facing an uncertain future, a strong showing of Congressional support is needed. We urge you to join us as an original cosponsor of the National Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2011 so we can permanently protect these last remaining wild places for generations to come.

To become an original cosponsor of this bill or for more information please contact Celina Cunningham in Congressman Inslee's office at 5-6311. Deadline to become an original cosponsor is September 16, 2011.

Sincerely,



Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress



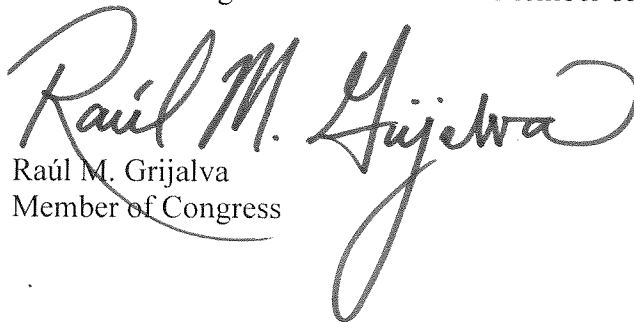
Maurice D. Hinchey  
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress