

April 28, 2008

Senator Patty Murray
US Senate
Room 173 SR
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Re: Cabin User Fairness Fee Act

The intent of the above legislation, passed in 2000, to be implemented January, 2009, was to provide a “fair fee” based on fair market value appraisals of permitted Forest Service lots. Language recognizing the impact of permit restrictions—can’t be a permanent resident, can’t restrict access, paint color, size, roads, services available, etc—on lot use, intended by Congress, is not being applied in the Forest Service appraisal process. The annual fee based on 5% of appraised value does not reflect the multiple negative restrictions.

The recreation residence program initiated in 1897 has provided a valuable forest experience for generations of entire families, children, grandchildren and their friends and remains a valid use of forest land. Cabin owners are stewards of the forest and are a cooperating partner with Forest Service in monitoring appropriate use of that forest. The lot appraisal process being used is flawed since the Forest Service position is that CUFFA does not allow for adjustment for these restrictions. We strongly disagree.

Vital issues need to be addressed by Congress

- appraisal process is not valid since adjustments for permit restrictions are disallowed
- early appraisal results reflect substantial increases
- continued affordable cabin ownership is limited denying a forest experience for citizens, urban children as well as cabin owners

Please research and investigate the CUFFA history and the process that governs Forest Service lot appraisal by contacting Under Secretary, USDA, Mark Rey for clarification. We look forward to your immediate action, suggested solutions and support in bringing about legislative relief for this vital concern. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,