LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OREGON

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

December 8, 2020

Senator Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for the Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act

Dear Senator Merkley:

The League of Women Voters of Oregon would like to publicly express our support for your leadership to protect the North Fork Smith River watershed in Oregon by introducing S. 2875 the *Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act*.

The North Fork Smith River has unique scenic, historic and recreational values. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms. The League supports policies and statutes that promote comprehensive long range planning for conservation and management of ground and surface water and the improvement of water quality.

The North Fork Smith River and its tributaries support several imperiled fish species including Southern Oregon and Northern California Coast coho salmon, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened. Other species that depend on this river system's clean cool water for survival include steelhead trout, Chinook salmon, and coastal cutthroat trout.

Fishermen, kayakers and white water rafters from across the nation flock to the Smith River system, including the North Fork Smith River in Oregon, to paddle and float its clear waters. Camping, swimming, and hiking also draw thousands to this watershed. These recreational activities support the economies of local communities. Central to the river's recreational attraction is its crystal clear pure waters.

The downstream communities of Gasquet, Hiouchi, Smith River and Crescent City all rely on the Smith River for clean drinking water and agricultural use.

We support the Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act. We believe this expansion is necessary in order to protect the river from the threat of pollution from potential mining operations and to maintain its extraordinary water quality and ecological values.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Gladstone	Claudia Keith	Alyssa Babin
LWVOR President	LWVOR Climate Emergency Portfolio	Hard Rock Mining Study Chair