



September 10, 2025

Ecosystem Management Coordination
Attn: Director
201 14th Street SW, Mailstop 1108
Washington, DC 20250-1124

RE: Comment on EIS of the proposed rescission to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule – Docket No. FS-2025-0001.

SENT VIA: Regular USPS Mail, and Electronically

Dear Director,

On behalf of the Walla Walla City Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the initiation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) and rulemaking concerning the management of inventoried roadless areas of National Forest Service lands.

The City of Walla Walla is located in eastern Washington state and sits at the base of the Blue Mountains of the Umatilla National Forest located in southeast Washington and northeast Oregon. Within the Umatilla National Forest is the Mill Creek watershed, which flows into the Walla Walla River and ultimately the Columbia River.

The Mill Creek Watershed is a 36 square mile area at the upper end of the headwaters of Mill Creek and is the primary source of drinking water for over 35,000 residents. The watershed is closed to the public and protected through a 1918 cooperative agreement between the City of Walla Walla and the Department of Agriculture. A majority of the Mill Creek Watershed lies within the area mapped as Inventoried Roadless Areas designated by the 2001 Roadless Rule. It is the City's continued interest to protect the Mill Creek watershed as a precious source of drinking water for City residents.

The Federal Register Notice and request for public comment, published in Vol. 90, No 166 / Friday, August 29, 2025, provides a preliminary list of substantive issues and summary of expected impacts the EIS will evaluate, which are considered reasonably foreseeable social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed rescission. Notably, not listed or summarized are the social, economic, and environmental impacts that rescission of the rule may have on water quality, quantity, and seasonal flows for drinking water. The City of Walla Walla respectfully submits that those impacts are reasonably foreseeable and should be analyzed and evaluated in the proposed EIS.

The City encourages the U.S. Department of Agriculture to consider the adverse social, economic, and environmental impacts that rescinding the 2001 "Roadless Rule" may have on municipal watersheds, such as the City of Walla Walla's, which provides clean,

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and reliable drinking water to our residents. To this end, the City of Walla Walla is opposed to any rescission or change to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

The August 29, 2025 Federal Register Notice states, that the proposed rule, accompanied by a draft EIS, is expected by March 2026 along with a request for additional public comments. The City of Walla Walla reserves the right to provide additional comment when the proposed rule and draft EIS are prepared. We therefore ask that the City of Walla Walla be added to the interested party list and receive further notification of additional comment periods at the appropriate time.

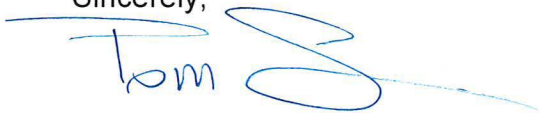
Notification of future actions should be sent to the following mailing address:

City of Walla Walla
Attn: Elizabeth Chamberlain, City Manager
15 N. 3rd Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362

and by email to the following address: echamberlain@wallawallawa.gov

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this matter.

Sincerely,



Mayor Tom Scribner, on behalf of the Walla Walla City Council

Brian Casey
Rick Eskil
Steve Moss
Gustavo Reyna
Jeffrey Robinson
Tom Scribner
Monte Willis