

Thank you Ambassador for your kind words. And on behalf of Kris Tompkins, thank you all so much for recognizing our conservation efforts in Latin America. I'd also like to highlight our appreciation of the Wilson Center's Latin American Program—as I am sure you all recognize the importance and value of having a non-partisan venue to host such an event. The center's ability to convene thought leaders that discuss ideas and policy, and encourage vigorous debate about pressing issues facing Latin America is admirable. However, it is the intersection of policy and action that makes the Wilson Center such a unique organization in the world.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Latin American Program as well as the Brazil Institute, and recognize the important work they do in the region and here in Washington, DC; especially **Cindy Arnson, Eric Olson, and Paulo Sotero.**

As it concerns the recognition of the Tompkins family's work over 25 years in Chile, both the Tompkins family and historically, Chileans themselves—recognize that national parks are a fundamental way to enhance conservation efforts.

They represent an enduring legacy that will be available for future generations. Through our conservation efforts, we are protecting vital ecosystems that enable biodiversity to flourish. Chileans also understand that a culture and appreciation of the natural world, needs to be respected and valued. For example, we also acknowledge the importance of the oceans and local marine ecosystems. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heraldo Muñoz highlighted at the Wilson Center's conference on Latin America today, Chile is leading the world in the protection of the ocean and its marine life.

Today, more so than ever before, these values must be shared not only with our neighbors in Latin America, but in regions throughout the world.

Since 1926, Chile has recognized the importance of national parks, and no matter the political affiliation, every President of my country has worked to expand and further institutionalize our national park system. Our experience in Chile is that the preservation of the natural world is not mutually exclusive of our cultural heritage or values. We hold a vision of development that is

aligned with protecting the environment, while at the same time improving the livelihoods of those in surrounding communities.

The agreement with the Government of Chile and Tompkins Conservation allowed for the creation of 10 million acres for new national parks. This represents the largest donation toward conservation efforts in the world to date. An initiative to enhance local economic development and ecotourism through conservation efforts will be implemented and known as the “Route of Parks in Patagonia”

This plan will include 17 national parks across 1,700 miles of roads and ferry routes; from Puerto Montt to Cape Horn. We hope that our work brings greater attention to issues of environmental protection, but even more so we hope that it will be a model for other countries in the region if not the world.

On behalf of Kris Tompkins and the Tompkins Conservation team—thank you and we hope you will support conservation efforts at home and abroad. And of course—you’re welcome to visit Chile and see the new Route of Parks in Patagonia!