



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

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LANCE M. LARSON
Director of Legislative Affairs

July 9, 2010

The Honorable David Dreier
United States House of Representatives
237 Cannon Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: "Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests Wilderness Act of 2010" - **SUPPORT**

Dear Congressman Dreier:

The County of San Bernardino has reviewed your proposed legislation that would provide for the expansion of the Cucamonga Wilderness Area within the San Bernardino National Forest.

The County concurs with your proposal to add 6,265 acres to the Cucamonga Wilderness Area within the San Bernardino National Forest area of San Bernardino County. Your proposal is consistent with the extensive research and review conducted by your office and the United States Forest Service (USFS) with input from the County's local fire agencies. This acreage meets the relevant criteria outlined by the 2005 USFS Forest Management Plan and is reasonable given such criteria. This proposal will better define boundaries adjacent to existing Wilderness Areas and assures necessary boundaries between Wilderness Areas and residential mountain communities.

The County thanks you for your attention to the concerns raised by the residents of Mt. Baldy. As a community surrounded by the Angeles National Forest, it is occasionally subjected to natural occurrences such as fire, flood and landslides. The retention of existing local land management decisions, as provided by current law, will ensure the safety of these residents, especially in times of emergencies. It will also not overburden the community with additional regulations. Existing standards in this area assure the preservation of the community's natural surroundings, and they offer the flexibility to address additional needs in the future if needed.

Additionally, the County supports provisions in the bill to amend local fire management plans that apply to designated wilderness areas or wilderness additions within both the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests. The County also supports identifying local officials who can take such actions in these areas as necessary for fire prevention and watershed protection.

Further, the County supports your language requiring the Local Fire Management Plan, during times of wildfire threat to communities, to authorize the Incident Commander or designee to use any methods of modern fire suppression, including mechanized heavy equipment and the installation of fire breaks (roads), to cease progression of a wildfire.

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.

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At this time, the County of San Bernardino is not supportive of any expansion of Wilderness Areas beyond the acreage defined within this proposed plan and requests the opportunity to review the United States Forest Service study on national wild and scenic rivers system, initiated by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, once it is completed.

We thank you Congressman for offering the opportunity for San Bernardino County to contribute to discussions about the pending Cucamonga Wilderness Area proposal. The County believes your proposal will preserve sensitive forest lands, strengthen the ability of firefighters to immediately and effectively respond to wildfires in wilderness areas, ensure that forest users have access to the recreational activities currently enjoyed in our National Forests, and will provide a balanced approach to addressing the diverse and oftentimes conflicting demands placed on these forest areas.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the County of San Bernardino, thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,


GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors


PAUL BIANE
Second District Supervisor