



April 28, 2014

Honorable Judy Chu
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 2015

Dear Representative Chu,

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) congratulates you on the release of your draft legislation and thanks you for your leadership and efforts to establish the San Gabriel National Recreation Area (SGNRA) and new Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations. As the country's oldest advocate dedicated to the preservation and expansion of our National Parks, we wholeheartedly support your draft legislation.

The over 650,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains and adjacent watershed represent a tremendous natural and cultural resource for not only the residents of the greater Los Angeles area, but for the nation as whole, and one of the region's most significant conservation opportunities in a generation. Establishing the SGNRA, and including the new Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations, will bring better protection and management to a unique ecosystem, critical watershed and sites of historical and archeological significance. Few areas of the country can boast such a diverse range of habitats, including chaparral, oak woodland, riparian, desert and alpine environments; home to flora and fauna that include 16 threatened and endangered species. The watershed provides an important source of non-groundwater recharge to millions of residents and the area harbors evidence of over 7,000 years of human activity.

Los Angeles is home to some of the most park poor communities in the nation. Increasingly, research has found a direct relationship between public health, child development and other urban issues and access to outdoor educational and recreational opportunities. The SGNRA would represent a significant natural resource within a two-hour drive of over 17 million residents. Additionally, the new SGNRA will attract visitation from around the country and world, and serve as a catalyst for economic development. National Park units have proven to generate ten dollars in economic activity for local communities for every one dollar invested in tax-payer support. Additionally, for every two Park Service jobs created in a park, one job is created outside the park.

Recognizing the tremendous natural and cultural resources, conservation opportunities and strategic importance of the region, NPCA opened its Los Angeles office in January

of 2014. Please look to this office as a resource on National Park and other conservation issues. We look forward to working with you and the diverse constituencies that have come forward to support the creation of the SGNRA, a conservation legacy that will provide benefits today and to future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Arguelles", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis G. Arguelles
Los Angeles Program Manager