Community Applauds Rep. Judy Chu’s San Gabriel Mountains’ Legislation

*Bill will benefit families, protect access to clean water and increase tourism revenues*

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**LOS ANGELES** (June 12, 2014) – A broad partnership of residents, cities, local businesses, health and environmental justice organizations, community leaders and conservation groups commends Rep. Judy Chu (D-Pasadena) for introducing legislation that will permanently protect the San Gabriel Mountains, rivers and parks for millions of Southern California residents and visitors.

The bill will preserve the Angeles National Forest which provides 70 percent of Los Angeles County’s open space and one-third of its drinking water.

“Water is the lifeblood of our economy and contributes to the vitality of Southern California especially in areas like the San Gabriel Valley that depend on renewable supplies from watershed areas in the San Gabriel Mountains,” said Michael Whitehead, Chief Executive Officer of the San Gabriel Valley Water Company. “Congresswoman Chu has worked diligently with local water providers to ensure that access to our watershed and water supply is protected. A clean and reliable water supply is crucial to the quality of life residents of the San Gabriel Valley currently enjoy.”

Other supporters for the National Recreation Area include: the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, Fontana Water Company, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority and the Valley County Water District.

San Gabriel Mountains Forever (SGMF) joined thousands of residents to support a vision to protect the San Gabriel range, its rivers and urban parks that make up Los Angeles’ backyard.

Rep. Chu’s San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act will preserve 615,000 acres in the Angeles National Forest and a portion of the San Bernardino National Forest, some foothill areas, the west Puente Hills, and lower stretches of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers that dip down into local communities.

The effort follows more than a decade of federal studies, public meetings and discussions with cities, business leaders, residents, recreation users and other stakeholders.

As one of the most visited forests in the nation, Rep Chu’s efforts can help bring the Angeles National Forest improved visitor services that include safe river access, more rangers, multilingual and multicultural signs and displays and improved picnic sites.
As an educator, healthy kids who exercise regularly make better students. Yet a recent study revealed that of the 60 biggest American cities, sadly Los Angeles was 45th for access to parks or open space,” said Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez, an Azusa school board member and President of the California Latino School Boards Association. “We know the negative impacts on our children’s weight and well-being. That’s why protecting these areas is an important gift for all of our families.”

The spectacular San Gabriel Mountains are home to often snow-capped alpine peaks, pine forests, chaparral hills, waterfalls and wild, free-flowing rivers. It is essential habitat for endangered and sensitive species including the Nelson’s Bighorn sheep, California condor, mountain lion and the Santa Ana sucker.

John Muir considered these wild lands as “pure and untamable as the sea.” Their rugged beauty attracts more than 3.5 million annual visitors who picnic, hike, ride bicycles and horses, fish and camp in the Angeles National Forest. This visitation – on par with Yellowstone National Park – also generates more than $60 million a year in local visitor spending, according to U.S. Forest Service data.


Permanently protecting the forest, rivers and parks will preserve their gifts of water, scenic wild lands and healthy recreation for future generations.

Note: Rep. Chu and Hilda Solis will join other special guests and supporters at a Saturday, June 14 celebration at Peck Park, 5401 Peck Rd, Arcadia Calif., 91006, at 9:30 a.m.

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San Gabriel Mountains Forever (SGMF) is a diverse partnership of residents, cities, local businesses, health and environmental justice organizations, faith and community leaders, and recreation and conservation groups. The vision of San Gabriel Mountains Forever is: Protection and enhancement of our mountains, rivers and parks with access for all.

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