



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Diverse Groups Applaud Congressman Garamendi’s Proposed Legislation to Expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

The expansion act includes tribal co-management and a Monument Management Plan.

January 11, 2022, Sacramento, Calif. – Environmental and community advocates are celebrating an important step toward the permanent protection of a rare and rugged Northern California landscape. Today, Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA03) introduced [House Resolution 6366](#) to expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act would add an adjacent tract of nearly 4,000 acres to the current monument’s footprint, support tribal co-management, and change the name of the additional wildlands from “Walker Ridge” to *Molok Luyuk* —Patwin for “Condor Ridge” —a name the Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation provided.

In 2015, President Obama designated Berryessa Snow Mountain a national monument, with Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA05) carrying the original bill. The monument, along with the proposed Condor Ridge (*Molok Luyuk*) addition, is culturally significant to numerous Native American tribes and notable for its varied habitats and wildlife, including imperiled animals. The ridge provides wildlife connectivity for many species including deer, mountain lions, and black bear.

“Molok Luyuk—or Condor Ridge—is a special part of Northern California and deserves special protections. We appreciate Congressman Garamendi’s leadership on this and his insistence that Native American voices be part of the conversation,” said Chairman Anthony Roberts of the Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation in Congressman’s Garamendi’s announcement today. “Our ancestors traveled and traded there for centuries. With these protections, the unique resources on Molok Luyuk will endure, and Californians will be able to enjoy its natural beauty for generations to come.”

Currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the area currently known as Walker Ridge is “a jewel of biodiversity,” according to Nick Jensen, conservation program director for the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), referring to Molok Luyuk’s 30 species of rare plants, ancient blue oak woodlands, rugged rock outcrops, wildflower meadows, and extensive stands of McNab cypress. “Congressman Garamendi has given California a precious gift by working to secure permanent protection for Molok Luyuk,” said Jensen. “We thank him for listening and responding to our Tribal partners and coalition of scientists, outdoor enthusiasts, and conservation advocates.”

For years, advocates called for lasting protection of Walker Ridge, helping to deter repeated development proposals for large-scale wind energy. The wind energy proposals persist, despite the California Energy Commission’s finding that the area had only moderate to low energy potential. In 2005 and again in 2011, CNPS submitted proposals to designate the region an Area of Critical Environmental Concern over worries that the area’s irreplaceable habitats would be permanently altered.

“Permanent protection for the extraordinary biodiversity and cultural resources of Molok Luyuk has been a priority for the Sierra Club Redwood Chapter for a long time, and we’re thrilled that Congressman Garamendi has stepped forward to make this goal a reality by adding the area to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument,” said Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon.

Rep. Garamendi’s proposed Expansion Act would provide much-needed, lasting protection for Molok Luyuk along with the requirement for a Monument Management Plan within one year. The legislation also would secure ongoing co-management with affected federally recognized tribes by requiring federal agencies to consult with tribes in the development of the management plan, subsequent management decisions, and “continued meaningful engagement” in the implementation of the plan.

“The *Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act* will safeguard Molok Luyuk’s natural beauty, wildlife, rare plants, and indigenous treasures while respecting Tribal stewardship over the lands,” said Tuleyome Executive Director Sandra Schubert. “It will also secure continued recreation opportunities in the area while providing a boost for local communities that have long called for permanent protection of the area. We commend Congressman Garamendi for this historic legislation protecting Molok Luyuk and all of the Monument’s treasures.”

Corina López of Great Old Broads for Wilderness echoed support for the legislation: “We value the principle of expanding the racial, cultural, and gender diversity in the conservation movement. This legislation demonstrates a commitment to our shared responsibility for the natural world as a community for present and future generations.”

Today, Walker Ridge attracts a wide range of people, who use the BLM property to hike, ride horses, cycle, birdwatch, and drive legal off-highway vehicles. Don Amador, a long-time trail recreation and resource management professional, explained that Molok Luyuk’s management plan would make it easier for the BLM to designate routes that provide connectivity to increase public access and enhance recreation opportunities for all user groups.

“As someone who has been visiting Molok Luyuk since I was a child, I’m thrilled that Congressman Garamendi is working to permanently protect the area,” said Ryan Henson, senior policy director for CalWild. “I’m also excited to see this historic advance in tribal federal land management law. CalWild looks forward to working with Mr. Garamendi to pass this very important and historic bill.”

The expanded monument also would mark an important step toward helping the State of California and the Biden Administration meet the critical goal of protecting 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by the year 2030, added Elyane Stefanick, California program director for the Conservation Lands Foundation,

in reference to California's [30x30 Initiative](#) and the federal [America the Beautiful](#) call-to-action. "Conservation Lands Foundation supports Congressman Garamendi's goal to expand the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and ensure this remarkable landscape has a robust management plan," Stefanick said. "The history of public lands is complex. The addition of Molok Luyuk honors the original stewards and caretakers of these lands and will help protect the area's rich biodiversity."

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Available for Interview

Please contact Liv O'Keeffe lokeeffe@cnps.org | (916) 738-7602 to request.

- Victoria Brandon, Chapter President | Sierra Club Redwood Chapter, Lower Lake
- Maureen Forney, NorCal Leader | Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director | CalWild
- Nick Jensen, PhD, Conservation Program Director | California Native Plant Society
- Margaret Meyncke, SoCal Leader | Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Sandra Schubert, JD, MA, Executive Director | Tuleyome

Spanish-Language Interviews Also Available:

- Corina López | Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

Some interviews granted upon request.

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