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Bill to Expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Earns Bipartisan Support, Advances Through Senate Committee

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act, introduced by Senator Padilla, includes provisions for tribal co-management

July 21, 2022, Sacramento, Calif. – Today, the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources passed the [Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act](#) (S. 4080) with unanimous and bipartisan support. The bill, introduced by Senator Alex Padilla’s (D-CA) with Senator Dianne Feinstein as co-sponsor, is a companion to [H.R. 6366](#), introduced by Congressman John Garamendi. Advocates and the Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation are thrilled this legislation, which would permanently protect a unique Northern California landscape, has received bipartisan support in the Senate.

“Glad to see my bill to expand the existing Berryessa Snow National Monument and give Tribal governments a seat at the table to better manage and care for these sacred Tribal lands move forward today,” said **Senator Padilla (D-CA)**. “The sacred lands within and around the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument are central to thousands of years of tribal origin stories,” “It is our duty to protect the abundant natural resources and the rich history on Molok Luyuk for today’s children and for future generations, and I look forward to working to ensure we see this bill to fruition.”

The legislation would add an adjacent 3,925 acres to the current Monument, 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.

“Molok Luyuk is home to both profound natural beauty and deep cultural significance. It is a special place, so it’s fitting that California’s tribes and the U.S. government create a special relationship to protect it,” said Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation Chairman Anthony Roberts. “We commend Senator Padilla and Senator Feinstein for their work on this bill.”

In 2015, President Obama designated Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument with Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA05) who introduced the original bill. The Monument, along

with the proposed Molok Luyuk (Condor Ridge) addition, is culturally significant to local Native American tribes and notable for its varied habitats and wildlife, including imperiled animals. The legislation would not impact privately owned, state, tribal, or non-federal land in any way.

“Molok Luyuk is a special landscape of fascinating geology, rich biodiversity, profound cultural significance, and beautiful views. This place is worthy of the permanent protection that Senator Alex Padilla and Representative John Garamendi have proposed,” said **Sierra Club Redwood Chapter** Chair Victoria Brandon.

Molok Luyuk (Condor Ridge) includes public land adjacent to the existing monument that is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The ridge is home to great biodiversity including over 30 species of rare plants, ancient blue oak woodlands, rugged rock outcrops, wildflower meadows, and extensive stands of McNab cypress. The area also provides wildlife connectivity for many species including deer, mountain lions, and black bear.

“This markup is an important milestone following decades of advocacy,” **California Native Plant Society** Conservation Program Director Nick Jensen said. “The bipartisan support for this legislation is a marvelous sign that we are on a strong path toward permanently protecting a region that is biologically precious and of great significance to Native American communities. We thank Senator Padilla for his exceptional leadership in expanding Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and honoring the area’s profound significance to our tribal partners.”

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act would provide much-needed, lasting protection for the land along with the requirement for a Monument Management Plan within one year. The legislation also calls for cooperative management with Tribes or Tribal partners in the development of the management plan and subsequent management decisions. The land is of tremendous present-day cultural and religious importance to the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, and includes sites central to their origin stories. The cooperative management provision would help safeguard this one-of-a-kind area in partnership with local Indigenous tribes.

“Molok Luyuk is a rare gem. It is filled with wildlife, rare plants, and indigenous treasures that local residents have long appreciated. We are excited to see this legislation progress through the Senate and thankful to the leadership of Senators Padilla and Feinstein,” said Sandra Schubert, Executive Director of **Tuleyome**. “We are grateful they have supported the effort to protect Molok Luyuk from current and future threats while respecting Tribal stewardship over the lands.”

The bill would also increase recreational access to world-class nature and outdoor activities for locals and visitors. Popular recreation activities on these lands include hiking, sightseeing, mountain biking, camping, horseback riding, and off highway vehicle (OHV) use on designated routes. Incorporating the area into the existing monument would improve land management, bring additional resources for trail construction and maintenance, help improve public access,

and protect sensitive wildlife and prime habitat areas. This will also help ensure [equitable access to the outdoors](#) in a [county where 22% of residents](#) identify as Hispanic or Latino.

“We admire Senator Alex Padilla for being a reliable champion for public lands since taking office,” said Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director for **CalWild**. “We are thrilled to see the bill to protect Molok Luyuk pass this milestone in Congress. This place is a public treasure and deserves permanent protection and improved management.”

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.

A letter of support for the legislation from over 50 organizations is available [here](#).

Photos of the lands to be protected are available for use [here](#). Please credit Bob Wick for these images.

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Available for Interview

Please contact Erika Brink erika@fcpcommunications.com | (951) 553-3561 to request.

- Victoria Brandon, Executive Committee Chair | Sierra Club Redwood Chapter
- Sandra Schubert, Executive Director | Tuleyome
- 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

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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