



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
CALIFORNIA**



26 June 2023

The Hon. Jared Huffman  
2445 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Judy Chu  
2423 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515-0528

The Hon. Salud Carbajal  
2331 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act, the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act, and the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act — SUPPORT**

Dear Representatives Huffman, Chu and Carbajal,

We write to express our gratitude at your introduction of the *Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act*, the *San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act*, and the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act* in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. Our members and supporters hail from all parts of California and frequently visit our public lands and waters for fishing, hunting and wildlife watching.

America's fish and wildlife are under increasing duress due to shrinking habitat, rising temperatures, increasingly severe wildfire and drought, and other factors. Many species or populations, including numerous stocks of native salmon and steelhead, are now so diminished they are listed under federal or state endangered species acts or are candidates for such listing. As a result, over the past several decades many formerly widespread opportunities for fishing, hunting and wildlife-watching have been reduced or lost altogether. The complete closure of

the marine and freshwater fishing seasons for salmon in California this year is a harsh reminder that the impacts of the decline in fish and wildlife populations are evident in real time and are causing terrible harm to the communities, cultures, and economies that depend on them.

We applaud your leadership, and that of your colleague Alex Padilla in the Senate, in working to ensure that California's unique biodiversity and natural and sporting heritage is sustained in the face of the warming climate and development pressures. More specifically, we strongly support the provisions in your bills that would permanently protect some of our last best fish and wildlife habitats and more equitably improve access for all to the outdoors.

The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act, in particular, will help protect and restore famous steelhead and salmon fisheries and blacktail deer habitat, rehabilitate areas degraded by illegal marijuana grows, improve public access to some of California's most unique public lands and waters, and improve the resiliency of the landscape to catastrophic wildfire. It will also help local communities capitalize on the region's reputation as one of the best areas for fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation in the West. [This video](#) provides context on the importance of public lands in northern California for fishing and the fishing economy.

Similarly, the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act will better protect segments of the San Gabriel River through federal Wild and Scenic River designations. The San Gabriel River is one of the few stream systems in southern California that offer trout fishing, and scientists have documented remnant genes of the rare southern steelhead in native trout populations here. And the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act will confer federal Wild and Scenic River designation on 159 miles of central California coastal streams and help conserve coldwater habitats and fishing opportunities in a semi-arid region where there are few coldwater fishing opportunities. Sespe and Piru Creeks in the Los Padres National Forest would benefit — these creeks are two of only three state-designated Wild Trout streams in southern California, and Sespe Creek supports a population of endangered southern steelhead.

Now more than ever, America needs wild lands and waters, relatively undisturbed natural places, clean rivers and lakes, and better infrastructure to sustain our fish and wildlife populations and to support outdoor recreation. For anglers, hunters and wildlife-watchers, there is no substitute for productive habitat. We must better protect and restore the best of what remains. We offer again our thanks for your commitment to conserving California's wild places and wildlife, and to improving opportunities for all sectors of our society to enjoy these remarkable resources. We pledge our assistance in helping pass these bills into law, and urge your continued engagement to advancing the provisions of these bills by any means possible.

Respectfully submitted,

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