

**REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

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DATE: August 16, 2023

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso  
Chief Legislative Analyst



Council File No. 23-0002-S72  
Assignment No: 23-08-0422

SUBJECT: Resolution to Federal Administrative or Legislative Action to Expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by 109,167 Acres

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Rodriguez – Krekorian) to include in the City’s 2023-2024 Federal Legislative Program, support for the President of the United States issuing a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act, and any administrative or legislative action which would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by 109,167 acres thereby preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats and ensuring access to nature and life-enhancing benefits to the region and City residents.

SUMMARY

The Resolution (Rodriguez – Krekorian), introduced June 30, 2023, states that, the San Gabriel Mountains watershed provides Los Angeles County with 70% of its open space and roughly 30% of its water. The Resolution notes that the San Gabriel mountains are home to 22 species of rare and endangered species of plants and animals. The Resolution also notes that presidents dating back to Theodore Roosevelt have invoked the Antiquities Act of 1906 to protect areas of historic or scientific interest.

The Resolution further states that both United States Congresswoman Judy Chu and Senator Alex Padilla have requested that President Biden issue a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act to expand wilderness protections to the mountains and foothills just north of the Los Angeles Basin by adding 109,167 acres to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The Resolution explains that this expansion would increase the monument by roughly a third, and extend its boundaries to include neighborhoods such as Sylmar, Santa Clarita, and Pacoima. The Resolution continues, noting that the proposed 182-square-mile expansion would push the monument’s boundaries to the southwest and include portions of Big Tujunga Creek, the Arroyo Seco, the upper Los Angeles River, and the upper Santa Clarita River.

Therefore, the Resolution requests that the City support the President of the United States issuing a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act, and any administrative or legislative action which would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by 109,167 acres thereby preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats and ensuring access to nature and life-enhancing benefits to the region and City residents.

## BACKGROUND

The Antiquities Act of 1906 is an act that was passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906. This law gives the President of the United States the authority, by presidential proclamation, to create national monuments from federal lands to protect significant natural, cultural, or scientific features.

In a letter dated June 8, 2023, addressed to President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack, and Chair Mallory of the Council on Environmental Quality, both United States Congresswoman Judy Chu and Senator Alex Padilla have requested the issuance of a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act to expand wilderness protections to the mountains and foothills just north of the Los Angeles Basin by adding 109,167 acres to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The letter states the following:

“Los Angeles County is one of the most park-poor and pollution burdened regions in the United States. However, more than 15 million people live within a 90-minute drive of the San Gabriel Mountains, which provide Los Angeles residents 70 percent of their available open space and 30 percent of their drinking water. The San Gabriel Mountains also contain rich cultural, historical, and geological resources, and provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species including the California condor, Nelson’s bighorn sheep, and the Santa Ana sucker.”

“In recognition of the San Gabriel Mountains’ significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources, President Barack Obama exercised his authority under the Antiquities Act in 2014 to protect approximately 436,177 acres of National Forest System land as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.”

The letter further states that this designation, however omitted most of the western area of the Angeles National Forest. As such, the requested presidential proclamation would include this area.

## DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

None

## BILL STATUS

None

*CD Fields*  
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Christopher Fields  
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Rodriguez – Krekorian)  
2. Letter (Chu – Padilla)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, stretching from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, the San Gabriel Mountains watershed provides Los Angeles County with 70% of its open space and roughly 30% of its water; and

WHEREAS, the San Gabriel Mountains are home to 22 species of rare and endangered species of plants and animals including the San Gabriel River dudleya, Nelson's bighorn sheep, mountain yellow-legged frogs, western pond turtles, Santa Ana suckers, tricolored blackbirds, California condors, and Bigcone Douglas fir trees which only grow in the mountains of Southern California; and

WHEREAS, presidents dating back to Theodore Roosevelt have invoked the Antiquities Act of 1906 to protect areas of historic or scientific interest; and

WHEREAS, California Representative Judy Chu and Senator Alex Padilla have requested that President Biden issue a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act to expand wilderness protections to the mountains and foothills just north of the Los Angeles Basin by adding 109,167 acres to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument; and

WHEREAS, this expansion would increase the monument by roughly a third, and extend its boundaries to include neighborhoods such as Sylmar, Santa Clarita, and Pacoima; and

WHEREAS, the proposed 182-square-mile expansion would push the monument's boundaries to the southwest and include portions of Big Tujunga Creek, the Arroyo Seco, the upper Los Angeles River, and the upper Santa Clarita River;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2023-2024 Federal Legislative Program support for the President of the United States issuing a presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act, and any administrative or legislative action which would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by 109,167 acres thereby preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats and ensuring access to nature and life-enhancing benefits to the region and City residents.

PRESENTED BY:

  
MONICA RODRIGUEZ  
Councilwoman, 7<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



cf

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ORIGINAL

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Brenda Mallory  
Chair  
Council on Environmental Quality  
730 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Vilsack, and Chair Mallory:

We write to request that you expand the boundary of California's San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by issuing a presidential proclamation under the *Antiquities Act of 1906*.

We have introduced the "San Gabriel Mountains Protection Act" (H.R. 3681) and the "Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California (PUBLIC) Lands Act" (S. 1776) to include adjacent federally owned land within the boundary. We request that you make this designation to protect the 109,167 acres included in the map entitled "Proposed San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Expansion" and dated June 26, 2019<sup>1</sup>. We also request that you visit the proposed designation and would be happy to host you for the visit.

Our legislation enjoys broad support from federal, state, and local officials, and was crafted in close coordination with affected communities and key stakeholders. The bill is the result of years of grassroots advocacy to bring greater protections and recreation opportunities to public lands adjacent to one of the largest population centers in the country, and it incorporates extensive feedback from local stakeholders, including the San Gabriel Valley Water Association, to ensure the designations do not impact water rights, utility infrastructure, or maintenance of facilities. The bill has also received support from over 30 local governments and elected officials, including the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, dozens of local businesses and organizations, and over 25 conservation and outdoor recreation organizations.

In February 2020 and February 2021, our bill passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support as part of the Protecting America's Wilderness Act. The bill again passed the House three separate times, in July 2020, September 2021, and July 2022, as amendments to the National Defense Authorization Acts. And in October 2021, the bill received a hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. To date, we are not aware of any organized opposition to our

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<sup>1</sup> USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region Geospatial Services. "Proposed San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Expansion" (June 26, 2019).

proposed national monument expansion. We would expect any *Antiquities Act* designation to enjoy equally broad support.


Los Angeles County is one of the most park-poor and pollution burdened regions in the United States. However, more than 15 million people live within a 90-minute drive of the San Gabriel Mountains, which provide Los Angeles residents 70 percent of their available open space and 30 percent of their drinking water.<sup>2</sup> The San Gabriel Mountains also contain rich cultural, historical, and geological resources, and provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species including the California condor, Nelson's bighorn sheep, and the Santa Ana sucker. For many residents of this dense urban area, the San Gabriel Mountains provide a unique opportunity—particularly for minority and low-income families—to access the physical, mental, and educational benefits of nearby public lands.

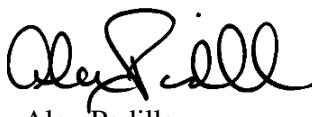
In recognition of the San Gabriel Mountains' significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources, President Barack Obama exercised his authority under the *Antiquities Act* in 2014 to protect approximately 346,177 acres of National Forest System land as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.<sup>3</sup> In addition to providing permanent protections for the area's unique natural and cultural resources, the monument designation has helped raise awareness of local recreational opportunities, promoted improved access, and encouraged greater availability of management resources, including enabling the U.S. Forest Service to leverage private-public partnerships to support the stewardship of the monument. However, this 2014 national monument designation omitted most of the western area of the Angeles National Forest.

Our legislation would build off more than two decades of grassroots work, recommendations from the National Park Service, and President Obama's national monument proclamation by expanding the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by 109,167 acres, in addition to also designating approximately 31,000 acres as new or expanded wilderness areas and adding 45.5 miles to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. These protections would increase public lands access and protect clean drinking water supplies for Los Angeles County, as well as enhance conservation of the area's rich cultural resources, unique geological features, critical wildlife habitat, and threatened and endangered wildlife. Expanding the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument would contribute to the Administration's goal under Executive Order 14008 of permanently conserving 30 percent of the United States by 2030, as well as the Administration's *America the Beautiful* initiative, which is intended to address the three interlocking crises of nature loss, climate change, and inequitable access to the outdoors.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to permanently protect the San Gabriel Mountains and to hosting you for an in-person visit to the San Gabriels.

Sincerely,

  
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

  
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Forest Service, San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (n.d.), <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/san-gabriel-mountains-national-monument>.

<sup>3</sup> Proclamation No. 9194, 3 C.F.R. 9194 (2014)