

**Statement of
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**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**

H.R. 6366, Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act

March 1, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 6366, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act. The bill would add approximately 3,900 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered public land in Lake County, California to the existing Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The bill also renames the area from “Walker Ridge” to Condor Ridge, or Molok Luyuk in the Patwin language. Additionally, the bill requires the BLM and U.S. Forest Service to expand opportunities for Tribal engagement in the planning and management of the monument.

On January 27, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, which launched a government-wide effort to confront climate change and restore balance on our nation’s public lands and waters. The President’s directive recognizes the opportunities America’s lands and waters offer to be part of the climate solution and outlines a historic and ambitious challenge to the nation to conserve them. The Biden Administration's America the Beautiful initiative calls for collaborative, locally-led conservation efforts of diverse landscapes that provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and supports Tribally-led conservation and restoration priorities. H.R. 6366 aligns with the Administration’s conservation goals and the Department of the Interior supports the bill.

Background

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument was established by President Obama’s Presidential Proclamation 9298 on July 10, 2015, in order to protect its rich biodiversity, including rare endemic species, unique serpentine outcrops, relic prairies, and riparian habitats. In addition to providing essential habitat for fish and wildlife, the area is important for scientific study, prehistoric and historic preservation, and exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities. The lands within the national monument are some of the most scenic in northern California, ranging from rolling oak-studded hillsides to steep canyons and ridgelines with expansive views. These lands retain deep cultural significance for roughly two dozen Federally recognized Indian Tribes who inhabited them for at least the last 11,000 years.

Encompassing more than 330,000 acres of public land, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument is jointly managed by the BLM (approximately 133,000 acres) and the U.S. Forest Service (approximately 197,000 acres). Since the establishment of the national monument, the two agencies have worked to carefully manage the objects and values identified in the proclamation. The agencies have held several community conversations to gather public input and build a shared vision for stewardship of the monument, including a workshop held in January with the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation where BLM discussed projects and possible collaboration with the Tribe. Additionally, the BLM has created and filled a new Tribal Liaison position in California to facilitate consultation and collaboration with Tribes.

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H.R. 6366 would add approximately 3,900 acres of land managed by the BLM to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in Lake County, California. Befitting the area's cultural significance to the many Tribes in this region, the bill renames the area commonly known as "Walker Ridge" to Condor Ridge, or Molok Luyuk in the Patwin language. The bill directs the Board of Geographic Names and the BLM to formally change all references in law, map, regulation, or other records to reflect the name change.

The bill (section 4) also directs the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service to complete a comprehensive management plan for the National Monument within one year of enactment. It requires the agencies to consult with affected Federally recognized Indian Tribes on the development of the monument plan and to establish parameters for continued meaningful engagement in subsequent management decisions. The BLM notes that thoughtful and deliberative land use planning efforts can take several years to complete, including public involvement and fulfilling requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act and each agencies' planning regulations. We would like to work with the sponsor to develop more achievable timelines that allow for robust public comment and coordination with Tribes through the planning process.

Finally, H.R. 6366 (section 5) provides opportunities for the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements and other financial partnership instruments with Federally recognized Indian Tribes for management of the National Monument. In January 2021, President Biden established his commitment to strengthen nation-to-nation relationships in his Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships. Consultation and collaboration are essential for Tribal governments to shape decisions for the protection of sacred sites and traditional cultural properties, conservation of native plants and wildlife, recreation, and other uses and values of the monument. President Biden recently built upon this commitment in announcing that the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture created the "Tribal Homelands Initiative." Through a joint Secretarial Order 3403, the two Departments codified a policy to facilitate agreements with Tribes to collaborate in the co-stewardship of federal lands and waters. Moreover, the Departments have also entered into a memorandum of understanding signed by eight agencies, which will increase collaboration with Tribes to ensure stewardship and access to sites, and incorporate traditional ecological

knowledge into management, treatment, and protection procedures. The Administration recognizes and affirms that the United States' trust and treaty obligations are an integral part of each Department's responsibilities for managing federal lands.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 6366. We look forward to the addition of Molok Luyuk to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.