



July 9, 2017

Mr. Ryan Zinke
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, Support for Retention of Current Boundary and Protections

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo, a public lands conservation group based in the Eastern Sierra. I write in my professional capacity, on behalf of our 700+ members, and also as a United States Citizen, Californian, and Outdoor Recreator to support retention of the current boundary and protections for San Gabriel Mountains National monument.

First, please consider that San Gabriel Mountains National Monument provides many recreational uses to over 15 million people who live within 90 minutes of this island of green. The area has more than 4 million visits per year and provides a variety of year-round recreational activities, including hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, nature viewing, picnicking, water activities and horseback riding and camping. San Gabriel is a hallmark of the Urban to Wild movement, connecting highly urban, park-poor communities to the open, rugged, natural spaces closest to them to promote recreation, outdoor awareness and lifestyle, and healthier communities. Importantly, San Gabriel Mountains also protects the water supply for millions of people, providing 30% of the drinking water for the City of Los Angeles.

Second, please know that, now more than ever, citizens of the United States understand that the outdoor recreation economy in the United States is responsible for a significant portion of the GDP, provides a significant number of jobs to Americans, and a significant amount of money (in taxes) to the federal treasury: The 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy national report revealed that outdoor recreation is an \$887 billion industry that supports 7.6 million jobs and generates \$65.3 billion in federal tax

revenue. Much of this economic activity depends upon access to recreational resources on public lands, including national monuments.

Third, please consider that the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument protects important historical and cultural resources representing successive layers of history. These include that of Native Americans, Spanish missionaries and colonialists, Mexican rancheros, and Euro-American settlers and prospectors. Native American history runs deep, at least 8,000 years, exemplified by the Aliso-Arrastre Special Interest Area known for its heritage resource values, including several rock art and cupules features, the concentration of which is unique to southern California. Due to urban development and natural processes, this area also contains the best preserved example of a Gabrielino pictograph that characterizes the California Tradition of rock painting.

Fourth, please consider that San Gabriel protects an array of ecological habitats. It provides a home to 67 plant species and 105 wildlife species considered sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered. Although proximate to one of America's most urban areas, the region has untrammeled wilderness lands of the highest quality, including four designated wilderness areas: San Gabriel, Sheep Mountain, Pleasant View Ridge, and Magic Mountain. These lands provide invaluable backcountry opportunities for the rapidly expanding nearby communities and also provide habitat for iconic species including the endangered California condor and least Bells' vireo, and the Forest Service Sensitive Nelson's bighorn sheep, bald eagle, and California spotted owl. Inventoried roadless areas and lands recommended for designation as Wilderness also provide important habitat, including a connectivity corridor important for wide ranging species, such as the mountain lion.

Other special features of the monument include:

- The San Gabriel mountains are among the fastest growing mountains in the world; the San Andreas and surrounding faults thrust the range up two inches annually;
- It is home to scientific landmarks like the San Dimas Experimental Forest; and
- The Mount Wilson Observatory associated with the formulation of the Big Bang Theory. Edwin Powell Hubble, working from the Mount Wilson Observatory, is credited with making some of the most striking discoveries in modern astronomy, such as concluding that distant stars were really galaxies.

In short, San Gabriel is a unique national treasure. It's designation clearly fulfills the requirements of the Antiquities Act, it is an important outdoor haven for a very large metropolitan area, protects and supplies a significant amount of that area's water supply

and protects many rare and sensitive species. For all of these reasons, Friends of the Inyo's 700+ members encourage the retention of current boundaries and protections for San Gabriel National Monument.

Sincerely,

Wendy Schneider
Executive Director
Friends of the Inyo