April 10, 2017

The Honorable Diane Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Friends of the Inyo wishes to extend our support for the California Desert Protection and Recreation Act (CDPRA) of 2017, and commend you for your steadfast leadership on conservation in the California Desert. In particular we support the designation of a National Scenic Area in the Alabama Hills, the protection of additional acreage in Death Valley National Park and the responsible management of recreational off-road routes in the desert. We are also pleased to see provisions requiring that land use plans and decisions regarding rights-of-way incorporate the impacts of climate change on species migration, soil, air quality, water quality and quantity.

We too share the bill’s vision of well-balanced, landscape-scale conservation consistent with the principles in the California Desert Conservation Area. The provisions of the bill will help boost the significant outdoor recreation economy in the California Desert, and uphold the priorities of the public throughout the desert. We recognize the hard work that you and desert stakeholders have put into crafting the pieces of this legislation.

We commend the bi-partisan effort to protect and conserve the incredible natural resources in California and especially the Alabama Hills. However, we would like to bring to your attention the language in Section 1707 regarding encroachment on public land. This language was removed from Congressman Cook’s bill as of May 2016 following its final mark-up in the House Natural Resources Committee. We encourage communication between your staff and Cook’s office to remedy discrepancies in the Alabama Hills Scenic Area language. We recommend a meeting with the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group in the coming weeks to review current Alabama Hills ‘National Scenic Area’ bill language in H.R.857 and how to best incorporate the updated language into SB.32.

Friends of the Inyo looks forward to seeing the small changes needed to make this bill consistent with stakeholder interest in the Eastern Sierra, particularly the community of Lone Pine. Thank you for your continued work to identify and protect special public lands throughout the California Desert and the Eastern Sierra.
Sincerely,

Jora Fogg
Preservation Manager
Friends of the Inyo

CC:
Honorable Senator Kamala Harris
Honorable Representative Paul Cook