

Congressional Record Statement

Legislative Hearing

Submitted by Congressman Ted W. Lieu (CA-33)

May 22, 2019

Chair Haaland, thank you for holding this important hearing on H.R. 1487, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Boundary Adjustment Study Act.

California's 33rd congressional district spans the coast of Los Angeles County from Malibu in the north to the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the south. The northern part of my district is home to much of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), which was established by Congress in the 1970s to preserve its natural and historic sites and to provide recreational, educational, scientific, and public health benefits to the region. Today, it spans more than 150,000 acres covering parts of the Santa Monica Bay watershed and areas in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

South of the existing SMMNRA, however, is the remainder of the Santa Monica Bay watershed. This area includes several miles of beaches and acres of wetlands all used for the recreational, educational, and scientific benefit of the community. It stands to benefit greatly from federal resources.

If enacted, H.R. 1487 would commission the National Park Service to conduct a three-year Special Resource Study to determine whether to add the entire Santa Monica Bay coastline from Venice Beach to Torrance Beach, as well as the Ballona Wetlands, Ballona Creek, Baldwin Hills, and San Pedro coastline to the SMMNRA or create a new national recreation area. In conducting the study, the National Park Service would consult with state and local governments, community groups, nonprofits, and residents. The study would become a basis for future Congressional action to modify the national recreation area borders.

Adding these areas of the watershed to the SMMNRA would make federal scientific and infrastructure resources available to maintain open space for conservation and recreational use in urban areas. Further, it would make it easier for various agencies to enter into cooperative agreements to manage the land and carry out various improvement projects such as those aimed at connecting trails or building wildlife corridors. Finally, enactment of this legislation would establish the first National Park Service presence in South Los Angeles and connect the entire Santa Monica Bay. Importantly, all of this would be accomplished without affecting private property rights or creating unfunded mandates on state or local government.

The Los Angeles coastal region stands to benefit tremendously from increased federal resources to preserve open space for conservation and recreation. I thank the Subcommittee for holding today's hearing and look forward to further consideration of H.R. 1487.