

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES**

Questions for the Record

**Legislative Hearing on H.R. 6032, H.R. 6964, H.R. 7581 [Discussion Draft ANS], H.R. 8115,
H.R. 8286, H.R. 8380, and H.R. 8387**

Questions from Rep. Grijalva for Chairman Attebery, Karuk Tribe

1. Can you describe the local support for this bill?

There is tremendous local support for this bill. As part of our outreach plan, the Karuk Tribe has held public hearings and met with all local tribal and local governments, local landowners who could be impacted by this transfer of land into trust, and the environmental community. We have received numerous letters of support (attached), including from local landowners who are within the footprint of the land transfer.

2. Your testimony mentions the disruption to your Tribe's ceremonies.

a. How would this bill address these concerns and protect inter-generational teachings?

Our ceremonies are vital to keeping our world in balance, they are conducted the same way every year since time began: we have an inherent right and responsibility to continue these same ceremonies, practices, rites and prayers ensure our survival as Karuk People. If the Tribe has management authority over the land we utilize for ceremony we are able to conduct land use management consistent with Karuk tribal ceremonies, perform much needed maintenance and restorative activities, and increase the safety and solitude needed for our ceremonial leaders and participants. Our ceremonies and traditions are fundamental to the inter-generational learning needed to ensure future generations of Karuk people know and understand Karuk culture and customs.

3. Your testimony highlights the cultural significance of these lands.

a. Do you mind sharing how cultural preservation falls under the federal government's trust and treaty responsibility?

From our perspective, the United States has an obligation to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of the Karuk Tribe. This is especially true when, as is the case here, the United States administers lands that were once part of the Karuk Tribe's aboriginal homeland and taken from our ancestors. Part of the obligation to protect and preserve is to provide for religious and cultural practices on these lands so that we may continue to pass down through the generations those teachings and values that are uniquely Karuk.

4. Can you expand on your discussions with the US Forest Service in regards to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers that lie within these lands?

The Karuk Tribe's partnership with the Forest Service has been necessary and important due to the intersections between land management, access and capacity building. Our use of these lands will continue to be consistent with The Wild and Scenic Rivers System designation and as such, we have been open to administering the Wild and Scenic designation on behalf of the Forest Service that is associated with the lands that will be placed into trust (With a future congressional appropriation, the Karuk Tribe could possibly administer this Wild & Scenic portion of the Klamath River). The Forest Service has not expressed any administrative concerns.



The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández
Chair
Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples
1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Letter of Support for HR 6032, The Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Chairwoman Leger Fernández,

On behalf of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WGRP), please accept this letter of support for the proposed legislation which serves to reinstate Karuk people to free, unfettered and undisturbed access to their sacred places. We implore you to take this opportunity to right an historical wrong, and take action to return part of what was taken from them.

The Karuk have lived and conducted ceremonies at Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam since the beginning of time. The Karuk Tribe's historic and present-day government to government relations with the United States is due in large part to their continued presence and traditional and customary uses of Katimiin, Aamekyáaraam, and several other ceremonial areas. These areas are integral to the perpetuation of Karuk customs and culture as well as to Karuk cosmology and creation.

WGRP is a group collaboratively co-led by the Karuk Tribe along with other local, non-governmental organizations who have been working on landscape, watershed, and fire management issues for decades. One area of focus is on creating community and ecological resiliency to wildland fire through a systems approach of restoring area forests and watersheds. Our work spans a 1.2-million-acre planning area in Humboldt and Siskiyou Counties that largely follows Karuk aboriginal territory. We are guided by our mission is to "maintain resilient Klamath ecosystems, communities, and economies guided by cultural and contemporary knowledge." Legislation of HR 6032 is fundamental to this mission.

We wholly and emphatically support the Karuk Tribe's efforts to ensure the repatriation and management of Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam so their Tribal ceremonial leaders, traditional practitioners, and community members will have access to these lands for traditional and customary uses in perpetuity.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jodie Pixley".

Jodie Pixley, Partnership Coordinator
Western Klamath Restoration Partnership



May 27, 2022

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández
Chair, Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples
House Committee on Natural Resources

RE: H.R. 6032, The Katimiîn and Aamekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act — SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Leger Fernández,

We write in support of H.R.6032, *The Katimiîn and Aamekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act*. This legislation would restore free and undisturbed access for the Karuk people to their sacred places by transferring ~1,000 acres along the Klamath River from the US Forest Service to the Department of the Interior to be held in trust for the Karuk Tribe. The land is currently part of a larger Cultural Management Area recognized for its significance to the Tribe. Called “Katimiîn” in the Karuk language, these 1,000 acres are the heart of the Karuk’s ancestral territory, “literally the center of the universe, a spiritual balance point for all of existence.” The Karuk people have lived and conducted ceremonies at Katimiîn and Aamekyáaraam since the beginning of time. These areas are integral to Karuk cosmology and creation belief as well as the perpetuation of Karuk customs and culture.

Trout Unlimited has been working with the Karuk and other signatories to the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement for more than two decades to restore the Klamath River and its once-prolific runs of salmon and steelhead. Ensuring that these lands will be held in trust for the Karuk is consistent with the overall goal of renewing the Klamath’s ecological, cultural, and community values, and we are grateful to Rep. Huffman efforts to help us attain that goal while righting an historical wrong.

We support the Karuk Tribe’s efforts to ensure the repatriation and management of Katimiîn and Aamekyáaraam so their ceremonial leaders, traditional practitioners and community members will have access to these lands for traditional and customary uses in perpetuity.

We urge you to schedule a hearing to consider and advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Johnson
California Director

CC: The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair, House Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee
Congressman Jared Huffman

A mission to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon.

California Office: 5950 Doyle Street, Suite 2, Emeryville, CA 94608
National Office: 1777 N Kent St., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22209



PO Box 34 · Forks of Salmon, CA · 96031

August 9, 2022

Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez, Chair
Subcommittee For Indigenous Peoples Of The United States
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Legislative Hearing Request: H.R. 6032 - Katimiñ and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act

Dear Chair Leger Fernandez:

On behalf of the whitewater paddling community, American Whitewater writes to express our support for the Katimiñ and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act (H.R. 6032) and ask that you schedule a hearing for this legislation. This legislation would take certain Federal land located in Siskiyou County, California, and Humboldt County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Karuk Tribe. The Katimiñ and Ameekyáaraam land is located in the aboriginal territory of the Karuk Tribe and represents the center of the Karuk universe at the confluence of the Salmon River with the Klamath River. Restoring these unceded lands to the stewardship of the Karuk Tribe is a long overdue moral imperative.

About American Whitewater

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) river conservation organization founded in 1954 with approximately 50,000 supporters, 6,500 dues-paying members, and 100 local-based affiliate clubs, representing whitewater enthusiasts across the nation. American Whitewater's mission is to protect and restore America's whitewater rivers and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects

*Our mission is to protect and restore America's whitewater rivers
and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.*

the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. Our vision is that our nation's remaining wild and free-flowing rivers stay that way, our developed rivers are restored to function and flourish, that the public has access to rivers for recreation, and that river enthusiasts are active and effective river advocates. Our members live, work, and recreate in the Klamath River watershed and within the lands and waters included in this bill.

Congressional Hearing Examining Tribal Co-Management of Public Lands

On March 3, 2022, the full House Natural Resources Committee held the first Congressional Hearing examining Tribal Co-Management of Public Lands. The hearing examined broad issues of Tribal land dispossession enacted by the U.S. government and the impact of that dispossession on federal land management practices. The Committee heard from a witness panel comprised of Indigenous voices who provided cultural, historical, and legal perspectives on the importance of tribal co-management. As a follow up to this oversight hearing, we urge the Subcommittee For Indigenous Peoples to act on legislative proposals that address issues raised. The Katimiin and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act is a legislative opportunity where the Subcommittee can immediately act to advance legislation demonstrating a commitment to address issues that were raised in the March hearing.

Support for H.R. 6032 - Katimiin and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act

American Whitewater strongly supports the Katimiin and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act (H.R. 6032), introduced by Representative Huffman. This legislation would transfer administrative jurisdiction of the Katimiin and Ameekyáaraam land, representing 1,031 acres, from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Secretary of Interior to be held in trust for the benefit of the Karuk Tribe to be used for traditional and customary uses. This would re-establish the Karuk Tribe as the stewards of these lands for Tribal ceremonies, education, and cultural uses and will ensure that Tribal ceremonies can be conducted without interruption or interference.

The whitewater boating community enjoys recreational opportunities on both rivers that flow through lands included in this legislation. The Salmon River from Brannons Bar to the confluence with the Klamath River is known to boaters as the Lower Salmon,¹ and the run on the Klamath River from this point down to Dolans Bar near Orleans, California is known to boaters as the Ikes Run.² We understand and respect that when we pass through these

¹ Salmon River, Brannons Bar to Klamath River, American Whitewater National Whitewater Inventory, <<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/view/river-detail/11392/main>>.

² Klamath River, Ishi Pishi Bridge to Dolans Bar (Ike's Run), American Whitewater National Whitewater Inventory, <<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/view/river-detail/235/main>>.

sacred lands we come as visitors to a place of deep spiritual and cultural significance to the Karuk people and that the World Renewal Ceremonies that they hold here are central to their culture and identity. We have an interest in further educating our community on the importance of these sacred lands and support the Karuk Tribe in their efforts to ensure ceremonies can be conducted without interruption or interference. We welcome any opportunity to work directly with the Karuk Tribe to develop appropriate education and outreach materials for our community and the general public.

Conclusion

On behalf of the whitewater paddling community, request scheduling a hearing and providing an opportunity to accept testimony on this legislation. We strongly support the Katimiin and Aameekyaaraam Sacred Lands Act (H.R. 6032). We urge you to move this bill to re-establish the Karuk Tribe as the steward of their sacred lands.

Sincerely,



Scott Harding
Stewardship Associate
PO Box 34
Forks of Salmon, CA 96031



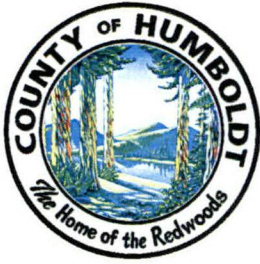
Theresa L. Lorejo-Simsiman
California Stewardship Director
12155 Tributary Point Drive #48
Gold River, CA 95670



cc:

Russell 'Buster' Attebery, Chairman
Karuk Tribe
P.O. Box 1016
Happy Camp, CA 96039

Representative Jared Huffman
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5TH STREET, ROOM 111
EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501 PHONE: (707) 476-2390

November 3, 2020

U.S. Representative Jared Huffman
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Letter of Support for Legislative Proposal: The Repatriation of Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam, Karuk Sacred Sites

Congressman:

On behalf of Humboldt County, please accept this letter of support. This legislative proposal would right a wrong that has prevented Karuk people from free and unfettered access to their most sacred place.

The Karuk people have lived and conducted ceremonies at Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam since the beginning of time. The Karuk Tribe's historic and present-day government to government relations with the United States is due in large part to their continued presence and traditional and customary uses of Katimiin, Aamekyáaraam, and several other ceremonial areas. These areas are integral to understanding Karuk cosmology and creation as well as the perpetuation of Karuk customs and culture. Ceremonial leaders conduct ceremonies and rites regardless of the occupation of these lands by others.

Natural resource utilization and management remains a vital part of Karuk culture. The harvest of salmon, acorns, deer, elk, mushrooms, and other natural products still serve as subsistence for many tribal families while the act of hunting, gathering, managing, and processing these natural food products help define the Karuk Tribe's cultural identity.

The Karuk Tribe's aboriginal territory encompasses over 1.48 million acres of Northern California and Southern Oregon. Currently, 95% of Karuk aboriginal territory is managed by the Six Rivers and Klamath National Forests. As a result, the Tribe struggles to ensure that traditional management practices and Karuk cultural values are integrated into management decisions.

We support the Karuk Tribe's efforts to ensure the repatriation and management of Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam so their Tribal ceremonial leaders and traditional practitioners will have access to these lands for traditional and customary uses in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Estelle Fennell, Chair
County of Humboldt



YUROK TRIBE

190 Klamath Boulevard • Post Office Box 1027 • Klamath, CA 95548



August 3, 2022

Chairman Schatz and Vice Chairwoman Murkowski
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for Karuk Lands Bill and Tribal Land Restoration

Chairman and Vice Chairwoman,

The Yurok Tribe submits this letter to support the Katimiñ and Ameekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act (H.R. 6032), also known as the Karuk Lands Bill. This Bill was created to restore land to the Karuk Tribe and recognize the Karuk Tribe's role and responsibility in managing federal lands within its territory. By restoring these lands to the Karuk Tribe, who were the original stewards of such lands, the Karuk Tribe can exercise its tribal sovereignty and traditional practices without interruption. We extend our support to the Karuk Tribe through this Bill.

Indeed, the Yurok Tribe supports tribal land restoration for all tribes and believe that tribes should support each other's land restoration efforts. Like the Karuk Tribe, we introduced the Yurok Lands Act (H.R. 7581). Our Bill was created to reclaim our role as the original stewards of our land by revising our reservation boundary line to transfer more than one thousand acres of historically Yurok land back to our Tribe. The Karuk Lands Bill and Yurok Lands Act are important legislation and promote the overall goal of tribal land restoration.

Lastly, the Biden Administration supports our overall goal of tribal land restoration. The Biden Administration, for example, promised to "provide tribes with a greater role in the care and management of public lands that are of cultural significance to Tribal Nations." Likewise, the Department of the Interior has launched the Tribal Homelands Initiative which increases opportunities for tribes to participate in federal lands management. We urge you to quickly take up and pass the Karuk Lands Bill and continue to work toward this shared goal of tribal land restoration.

Sincerely,


Joseph L. James
Chairman
Yurok Tribe

CC: Chairman Attebery, Karuk Tribe
Sen. Feinstein
Sen. Padilla
Rep. Huffman

DATE: 10/23/2020

Name:

Robert Blanchard

ADDRESS:



RECEIVED
NOV 09 2020

BY:

RE: Letter of Support for Legislative Proposal: The Repatriation of Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam, Karuk Sacred Sites

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter of support. This legislative proposal would reduce barriers to the management and use of a portion the Karuk Tribe's aboriginal territory by Karuk people.

The Karuk people have lived and conducted ceremonies at Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam since the beginning of time. The Karuk Tribe's historic and present-day government to government relations with the United States is due in large part to their continued presence and traditional and customary uses of Katimiin, Aamekyáaraam, and several other ceremonial areas. These areas are integral to Karuk cosmology and the perpetuation of Karuk customs and culture. Ceremonial leaders conduct ceremonies and rites regardless of the occupation of these lands by others.

Natural resource utilization and management remains a vital part of Karuk culture. The harvest of salmon, acorns, deer, elk, mushrooms, and other natural products still serve as subsistence for many tribal families while the act of hunting, gathering, managing, and processing these natural food products help define and preserve the Karuk Tribe's cultural identity.

The Karuk Tribe's aboriginal territory encompasses over a million acres of Northern California and Southern Oregon. Currently, 97% of Karuk aboriginal territory is managed by the Six Rivers and Klamath National Forests. As a result, the Tribe struggles to ensure that traditional management practices and Karuk cultural values are integrated into management decisions.

We support the Karuk Tribe's efforts to ensure the repatriation and management of Katimiin and Aamekyáaraam so their Tribal ceremonial leaders, traditional practitioners, and members will have access to these lands for traditional and customary uses in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

Signature Robert L. Blanchard

Michael & Melinda Stearns



RECEIVED
NOV 09 2020

BY:.....

October 23, 2020

Re: Letter of Support for Legislative Proposal: The Repatriation of Katimiîn and Aameekyáaraam, Karuk Sacred Sites

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support. This legislative proposal would reduce barriers to the management and use of a portion of the Karuk Tribe's ancestral territory by the Karuk people.

The Karuk people have lived and taken care of this place since the beginning of time. This place is important to their lives and spiritual practices. The natural resources here are a vital and enduring part of their culture.

Although the Karuk Tribe's ancestral territory is over a million acres, most of their territory managed by national forests. We believe that the Karuk people's traditional management practices and their cultural values should be integrated into land management decisions.

We have lived on our property here in Somes Bar since 1994 and are located nearly in the center of this legislative proposal. We support the Karuk Tribe's efforts to ensure the repatriation and management of their spiritual sites and the lands surrounding them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Stearns".

Michael Stearns

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melinda Stearns".

Melinda Stearns

DATE: 10/23/2020

Name:

Barbara Short

ADDRESS:



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NOV 13 2020

BY:

RE: Letter of Support for Legislative Proposal: The Repatriation of Katimiin and Aameekyáaraam, Karuk Sacred Sites

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Sincerely,

Signature

Barbara Short

Please address special use permits currently managed by the USFS such as for water rights access, road use, and such.
Thank you

Chris Hatton



November 16, 2020

Russell "Buster" Attebery and Joshua Saxon
PO Box 1016
Happy Camp, CA 96039

RECEIVED
NOV 20 2020

BY:

Dear Mr Attebery and Mr. Saxon,

Thank you for your recent letter asking for our comments and support regarding the Karuk Tribe's proposed draft legislation. As neighbors and shopkeepers here in Somes Bar, we are in full support of this legislation. We hope that this legislation is just a first step in returning lands in this area to the Karuk Tribe. We have owned and operated the Somes Bar store since 2003. The success of our business is due to the support, generosity, and guidance we have received from the Karuk Tribe, Karuk families and individuals during our time here. Knowing that our store and 2 acres of property is in the middle of the 1,182 acres proposed in this legislation, we would ask you to please reach out if you are interested in purchasing the store property and/or business if and when this legislation comes to fruition. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Hatton", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Hatton

DATE: 10/23/2020

Name: Christian Nafon / Tera Palmer

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

RE: Letter of Support for Legislative Proposal: The Repatriation of Katimiin and Aameekyáaraam, Karuk Sacred Sites

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Sincerely,

Signature  Tera Palmer