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TITLE: LOS PADRES CONDOR RANGE AND RIVER PROTECTION ACT

SPEAKER: Mr. LAGOMARSINO; Mr. PANETTA; Mr. VENTO

TEXT: [*H9637] Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2556) entitled the "Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act," as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2556

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that –

(1) areas of undeveloped National Forest System land within Los Padres National Forest have outstanding natural characteristics which will, if properly preserved, contribute as an enduring resource of wilderness for the benefit of the American people; and

(2) it is in the national interest that certain of these areas be designated as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System and Wild and Scenic Rivers System or reserved from mineral entry in order to preserve such areas and their specific multiple values for watershed preservation, wildlife habitat protection, scenic and historic preservation, scientific research, educational use, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration for the benefit of all of the American people of present and future generations.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS.

In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act, the following National Forest System lands are hereby designated as wilderness and, therefore, as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest and the Angeles National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 219,700 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Sespe Wilderness Area -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, which shall be known as the Sespe Wilderness. In recognition of the significant role that Mr. Gene Marshall played in the development of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized and directed to name the existing trail between Reyes Creek and Lion Campgrounds as the Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreational Trail.

(2) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 29,600 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Matilija Wilderness Area -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, which shall be known as the Matilija Wilderness.

(3) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 46,400 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "San Rafael Wilderness Addition -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, and which lands are hereby incorporated in, and shall be managed as part of, the San Rafael Wilderness.

(4) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 14,100 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Garcia Wilderness Area -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, which shall be known as the Garcia Wilderness.

(5) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 38,150 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Chumash Wilderness -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, which shall be known as the Chumash Wilderness and approximately 50 acres, which are generally depicted on the same map, which shall be designated as potential wilderness. The Toad Springs road corridor delineated as potential wilderness shall remain open to off road vehicle traffic until construction of an alternate route which bypasses this area is completed. These potential wilderness lands shall be automatically incorporated in and managed as part of the Chumash wilderness upon publication of a notice in the Federal Register.

(6) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 38,000 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Ventana Wilderness Addition -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, and which lands are hereby incorporated in, and shall be managed as a part of, the Ventana Wilderness.

(7) Certain lands in Los Padres National Forest, California, which comprise approximately 14,500 acres, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Silver Peak Wilderness Addition -- Proposed" and dated September 1991, and which shall be known as the Silver Peak Wilderness. In recognition of Mr. Nathaniel Owings' efforts to

preserve the Big Sur coastline, the area within the Silver Peak Wilderness area depicted as "Redwood Gulch" shall hereafter be known as the "Nathaniel Owings Redwood Grove." The Secretary is directed to place this name on all appropriate maps depicting the Silver Peak Wilderness Area of the Los Padres National Forest.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) In General. -- Subject to valid existing rights, each wilderness area designated by this Act shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

(b) Fire Prevention and Watershed Protection. -- In order to guarantee the continued viability of the watersheds of the wilderness areas designated by this Act and to ensure the continued health and safety of the communities serviced by such watersheds, the Secretary of Agriculture may take such measures as are necessary for fire prevention and watershed protection including, but not limited to, acceptable fire presuppression and fire suppression measures and techniques.

(c) Wildlife Management. -- In furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Wilderness Act, management activities to maintain or restore fish and wildlife populations, including the California condor, and the habitats to support such populations may be carried out within wilderness areas designated by this Act where consistent with relevant wilderness management plans in accordance with appropriate policies and guidelines such as those set forth in Policies and Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Management in National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Wilderness, dated August 25, 1986.

(d) Buffer Zones. -- The Congress does not intend for the designation of wilderness areas pursuant to this Act to lead to the creation of protective perimeters or buffer zones around such wilderness areas. The fact that nonwilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from areas within a wilderness shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area.

(e) Water Rights. --

(1) With respect to each wilderness area designated by this act, Congress hereby reserves a quantity of water sufficient to fulfill the purposes of this Act. The priority date of such reserved water rights shall be the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) The Secretary of Agriculture and all other officers of the United States shall take steps necessary to protect the rights reserved by this Act, including the filing by the Secretary of Agriculture of a claim for the quantification of such rights in any present or future appropriate stream adjudication in the courts of the State of California in which the United States is or may be joined and which is conducted in accordance with section 28 of the Act of July 10, 1952 (Ch. 651, 66 Stat. 560; 43 U.S.C. 666) (commonly referred to as the "McCarran Amendment").

(3) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as a relinquishment or reduction of any water rights reserved or appropriated by the United States in the State of California on or before the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) the Federal water rights reserved by this Act are specific to the wilderness areas located in the State of California designated by this Act. Nothing in this Act related to the reserved Federal water rights shall be construed as establishing a precedent with regard to any future designations, not shall it constitute an interpretation of any other Act or any designation made thereto.

SEC. 4. FILING OF MAPS AND DESCRIPTIONS.

As soon as practicable after enactment of this Act, a map and legal description of each wilderness area designated in section 2 shall be filed with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and Committee in Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives, and each such map and description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act. Correction of clerical and typographical errors in each such legal description and map may be made. Each such map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, District of Columbia and in the Office of the Forest Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest.

SEC. 5. RELEASE TO NONWILDERNESS USES.

The table contained in section 111(e) of the California Wilderness Act of 1984 (98 Stat. 1631) is amended by striking all lines pertaining to further planning areas on the Los Padres National Forest. Except for those areas designated as wilderness under Section 2 of this Act, these areas shall be released to nonwilderness uses in accordance with section 111 (except for subsection (e)) of such Act.

SEC. 6. DESIGNATION OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS.

In order to preserve and protect for present and future generations the outstandingly remarkable values of Sespe Creek, the Big Sur River, and the Sisquoc River, all in California, section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding the following new paragraphs at the end:

"() Sespe creek, california. -- The 4-mile segment of the main stem of the creek from its confluence with Rock Creek and Howard Creek downstream to its confluence with [*H9638] Trout Creek, to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture as a scenic river; and the 27.5-mile segment of the main stem of the creek extending from its confluence with Trout Creek downstream to where it leaves section 26, township 5 north, range 20 west, to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture as a wild river.

"() Sisquoc river, california. -- The 33-mile segment of the main stem of the river extending from its origin downstream to the Los Padres Forest boundary, to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture as a wild river.

"() Big sur river, california. -- The main stems of the South Fork and North Fork of the Big Sur River from their headwaters to their confluence and the main stem of the river from the confluence of the South and North Forks downstream to the boundary of the Ventana Wilderness in Los Padres National Forest, for a total distance of approximately 19.5 miles, to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture as a wild river."

SEC. 7. STUDY RIVERS.

(a) Designation. -- Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(a)) is amended by adding the following new paragraphs at the end thereof:

"() Piru creek, california. -- The segment of the main stem of the creek from its source downstream to the maximum pool of Pyramid Lake and the segment of the main stem of the creek beginning 300 feet below the dam at Pyramid Lake downstream to the maximum pool at Lake Piru, for a total distance of approximately 49 miles.

"() Little sur river, california. -- The segment of the main stem of the river from its headwaters downstream to the Pacific Ocean, a distance of approximately 23 miles. The Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with the Big Sur Multiagency Advisory Council during the study of the river.

"() Matilija creek, california. -- The segment from its headwaters to its junction with Murietta Canyon, a distance of approximately 16 miles.

"() Lopez creek, california. -- The segments from its headwaters to Lopez Reservoir, a distance of approximately 11 miles.

"() Sespe creek, california. -- The segment from Chorro Grande Canyon downstream to its confluence with Rock Creek and Howard Creek, a distance of about 10.5 miles."

(b) Consultation. -- Each study shall be conducted by the Secretary of Agriculture. The studies of the rivers and creeks named in subsection (a) shall be made in consultation with local authorities and appropriate local and state agencies.

SEC. 8. MINERAL WITHDRAWAL

(a) In General. -- Subject to valid existing rights, Federally owned lands and interests therein that are depicted on a map entitled "Mineral Withdrawal Area, California Coastal Zone, Big Sur -- Proposed" and dated September 1991 are withdrawn from entry, location, appropriation, leasing, sale, or disposition under the mining laws, mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws of the United States.

(b) Mining Claims. -- Subject to valid existing rights, all mining claims located within the withdrawal area depicted on the map described in subsection (a) shall be subject to such regulations as the Secretary of Agriculture may prescribe to ensure that mining will, to the greatest practicable extent, be consistent with the protection of scenic, scientific, cultural, and other resources of the area. The Secretary of Agriculture shall not approve any plan of operation prior to a determination that the unpatented mining claim was valid prior to the mineral withdrawal created by this Act and remains valid. A patent for lands within the withdrawal area that is issued after the date of enactment of this Act shall convey title only to the minerals together with the right to use the surface of lands for mining purposes subject to such regulations.

SEC 9. ADDITIONAL USES OF CERTAIN LANDS IN CALIFORNIA.

(a) Removal of Restrictions. -- Notwithstanding the restrictions otherwise applicable under the terms of conveyance by the United States of any of the lands described in subsection (b) to either the city of Pittsburg, California or Merced County, California, or under any agreement concerning any part of such lands between either such city or such county and the Secretary of the Interior or any other officer or agency of the United States, the lands described in subsection

(b) may be used for the purposes specified in subsection (c) of this section. (b) Lands Affected. -- The lands referred to in subsection (a) of this section are --

(1) Any portion not exceeding 1.5 acres of the lands described in that certain Quitclaim Deed of the United States to the city of Pittsburg, California, bearing the date of March 25, 1960, and recorded in Record of Deeds of the County of Contra Costa, State of California, as document No. 79015, in Book 3759 at page 1 of Records; and

(2) the south 15 acres of the 40 acres located in the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 20, township 7 south, range 13 east, Mount Diablo base line and Meridian in Merced County, California, conveyed to such county by deed recorded in volume 1941 at page 441 of the official records in Merced County, California.

(c) Authorized Uses. -- (1) The city of Pittsburg, California, may use the lands described in subsection (b)(1) of this section for a fire station or other public purpose, or may transfer such lands to another governmental entity on condition that such entity retain and use such lands for such purpose.

(2) Merced County, California, may authorize the use of the lands described in subsection (b)(2) of this section for an elementary school serving children without regard to their race, creed, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sex, operated by a nonsectarian organization on a nonprofit basis and in compliance with all applicable requirements of the laws of the United States and the State of California. If Merced County permits such lands to be used for such purposes, the county shall include information concerning such use in the periodic reports to the Secretary of the Interior required under the terms of the conveyance of such lands to the county by the United

States. Any violation of the provisions of this paragraph shall be deemed to be a breach of the conditions and covenants under which such lands were conveyed to Merced County by the United States, and shall have the same effect as provided in the deed whereby the United States conveyed the lands to the county. Except as specified in this subsection, nothing in this act shall increase or diminish the authority or responsibility of the county with respect to the lands.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act and amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McNulty). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. Vento] will be recognized for 20 minutes, and the gentleman from California [Mr. Lagomarsino] will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. Vento].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2556.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2556, the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act, was introduced by my colleague on the Interior Committee, Mr. Lagomarsino, who has worked diligently on this matter. It is an outstanding accomplishment by the ranking minority member on the Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee. This bill would designate 400,000 acres of wilderness in seven areas. It would also designate 84 miles of three rivers as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and provide for studies of 110 miles of five rivers for potential wild and scenic designation. All of these designations are in the Los Padres National Forest in California. The bill is very similar to one passed by the House twice in the 101st Congress but for which action was not completed by the Senate prior to adjournment.

I had the opportunity to visit the Los Padres National Forest during the last Congress and saw firsthand that the wilderness areas designated by this bill contain natural, scenic, recreational, and wildlife resources of high value as wilderness. The areas include deer, mountain lion, bear, bobcat, fox, and bighorn sheep. They also include habitat for the near extinct California condor. The preservation of this habitat is critical to condor

recovery efforts. Other unique features include unusual geological formations such as Topatopa Mountain and Sespe Hot Springs and diverse vegetation spanning an ecological range from grasslands to chaparral to conifer forests. Trees include big cone Douglas firs, live oaks, sycamores, and California junipers. Unlike conifers in other parts of southern California, many of which have been damaged by air pollution, the conifers of the Los Padres National Forest are particularly healthy and vigorous because of clean air blowing into the forest from the Pacific Ocean. The potential wilderness areas also include outstanding recreational opportunities for solitude, hiking, horseback riding, trout fishing, swimming, and camping. Cultural resources include ancient Chumash Indian villages.

The wild and scenic river designations in the bill are among the only free flowing streams left in southern California. They include dramatic gorges, deep pools, and small waterfalls. Some of the streams contain rainbow trout and one of them, Sespe [*H9639] Creek, has an anadromous population of Pacific lamprey. Sespe Creek also is one of the few streams in southern California with the potential for the reintroduction of an anadromous steelhead population.

The provisions of this bill have been carefully worked out in a bipartisan manner and I urge my colleagues to support this bill and these additions to the National Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River Systems.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. LAGOMARSINO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 2556, legislation which addresses wilderness and river protection issues in the Los Padres National Forest in southern California. This Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act represents the culmination of efforts of a number of parties over the last three Congresses and provides for comprehensive protection of resources within this heavily visited national forest. I want to express my strongest appreciation for the help and support of Congressmen Elton Gallegly and Bill Thomas. The chairman of the subcommittee, Bruce Vento, has been very helpful and cooperative, in fact, he has gone out of his way to do so. The same is true, also, of my good friend and colleague Leon Panetta. Congressman Harold Volkmer has been very helpful, too.

In all, this bill will provide for designation of almost 400,000 additional acres of wilderness in seven different management areas, designation of 85 river miles on three different rivers under the Wild and Scenic River Act, wild and scenic river studies totaling 110 miles on four other rivers, and withdrawal of over 100,000 acres of some of America's most beautiful coastal lands from mineral entry. With the designation of wilderness under this measure, almost 50 percent of the land within this forest will have been permanently protected as wilderness, providing the Los Padres National Forest with one of the greatest percentages of wilderness designation of any national forest in the country.

Throughout the development of this measure, I have been guided by two basic objectives. First, was to ensure that lands recognized under this act fully meet the criteria set forth under the 1964 Wilderness Act and 1968 Wild and Scenic River Act. As a longtime supporter of both of these important pieces of legislation, I could certainly not be an advocate for any measure which would assault the integrity of these laws.

Second, I have attempted to develop a balanced piece of legislation, one that recognizes the legitimate interests of all forest users. Due to conflicting interests, it was not possible to develop a bill which meets the full approval of all the various interest groups. Numerous difficult choices had to be made in crafting this measure. In order to guide me in these difficult choices, I have relied heavily upon the expertise of the Forest Service, the extensive public comment developed through the 1988 forest planning process, and guidance from my colleagues in the House and Senate.

The bill before us today is similar to my bill which passed the House twice last Congress. Major changes made from last year's measure which passed the House include: First, addition of 30,000 acres of wilderness; second, inclusion of water rights language; third, prohibition of directional drilling wilderness; fourth, rewrite of wildlife management and watershed protection sections of the bill, and fifth, deletion of a study of 16 miles of the Arroyo Seco River from wild and scenic river study.

The centerpiece of this legislation is the Sespe wilderness unit. This 220,500-acre wilderness unit surrounds the 31.5-mile segment of Sespe Creek which would be designated for protection under the Wild and Scenic River Act.

I must point out that in proposing portions of Sespe Creek for wild and scenic designation, great care has been taken to not foreclose the option for future water development projects at Cold Springs and Oat Mountain. On the other hand, this bill would prohibit construction of a water storage project at the Topatopa site, which is considered to be the best site for dam construction by water development interests.

It is important to recognize that this bill authorizes no dam construction on Sespe Creek or anywhere else. I have taken no position with respect to dam construction on Sespe Creek, because I believe that further study and a referendum of persons who would be affected by such a project are necessary prerequisites to any final decision. For Congress to make a decision at this point in time would be both premature and short sighted, especially in light of the drought conditions already facing southern California. I would also point out that until a final decision is made, this measure would ensure that all portions of the Sespe Creek within the forest would remain in their current, undeveloped state.

In addition to the Sespe Creek, my bill also provides for designation of 33 miles of the Sisquoc River within the forest and 19.5 miles of the Big Sur River. Other wilderness areas which would be designated under this bill are the 30,000-acre Matilija unit; 43,000-

acre San Rafael unit; 14,600-acre Garcia unit; 38,200-acre Chumash unit; 38,000-acre Ventanna unit; and the 14,500-acre Silver Peak unit.

I have worked very closely with Senators Seymour and Cranston in the development of this bill, and most of the difficult issues have been resolved among the three of us. I want to commend both Senators for their willingness to objectively evaluate and consider a full range of alternatives to address the issues contained in this bill. Their assistance and cooperative attitude will continue to be important as this measure proceeds through the legislative process. I would also like to recognize my cosponsors on this bill: Mr. Gallegly, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Panetta. Between the four of us, we represent all of the land in Los Padres National Forest addressed by this measure.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation we are passing today represents a comprehensive and far-reaching addition to the National Wilderness System and the National Wild and Scenic River System. It will preserve and protect in perpetuity some of our most serene and secluded canyons, rivers, and peaks. In addition, by virtue of their close proximity to the urban areas of southern California, these resources will provide numerous diverse recreational opportunities to meet the demands of an ever increasing population. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the other cosponsors and those Members who have worked with the gentleman from California [Mr. Lagomarsino], certainly including the gentlemen from California, Mr. Gallegly and Mr. Thomas.

The gentleman from California [Mr. Panetta] has made a special effort to be involved. This affects the area he represents, as well as areas represented by other Members. I want to commend him for his work and interest in this particular measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California [Mr. Panetta].

(Mr. PANETTA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my thanks to the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. Vento] for his help and his leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the legislation. It provides, I think, some vital Federal protection to some very sensitive resources in the Los Padres National Forest.

This has taken a great deal of work and cooperation from a number of Members, including Chairman Miller. The subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. Vento], has provided tremendous assistance, and Chairman de la Garza and the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. Volkmer], of the Committee on Agriculture, have also been very helpful in terms of this legislation.

In particular, I want to pay tribute to the gentleman from California [Mr. Lagomarsino] for his role in drafting [*H9640] this legislation and moving it toward its fruition. This is legislation that was passed by Congress twice in the last Congress, and it was, unfortunately, never considered by the Senate due to some unresolved differences. As a result of a great number of negotiations dealing with all the Senators and all those affected, we have now arrived at what I think is a very good balanced bill providing strong environmental protection and allowing for the multiple uses that we have with our forest resources.

The Los Padres National Forest is really, I think, one of the most ecologically sensitive resources of the central coast of California. It is home, as pointed out by Chairman Vento, to a number of rare and endangered species, including in fact the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, and the California condor. This is really the last stronghold to try to bring back what is, as I think everyone admits, one of the unique species that needs to be protected for the future.

The bill would add about 38,000 acres to the existing 167,700 acres of the Ventana Wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest, in particular in the district that I represent.

It also would add about 14,500 acres in what is called the coastal Silver Peak Area as wilderness.

The legislation also provides for some very important additions to the Wild and Scenic River System. The ones in my district that I would refer to in particular are the Big Sur River, which is now established, would be established under this legislation as wild and scenic from its headwaters to the point where it emerges from the Ventura Wilderness.

Finally, I want to point out that there is a provision here that would set aside a redwood grove in the Silver Peak Area called the Nathaniel Owings Redwood Grove in honor of the late Nathaniel Owings, who was a renowned architect in the country, and actually was greatly involved in the restoration of Pennsylvania Avenue here in Washington. He was also a pioneer in efforts to protect and preserve the integrity of the Big Sur coastline. He lived there for many years and his wife, Margaret, continues to reside in that area. She, too, has been a great leader in terms of environmental issues in that area.

It is because of Mr. Owings' efforts and citizens like him that the Big Sur coastline has been able to remain in its pristine state. So dedicating this grove in his name is a fitting tribute to this man and his years of hard work on behalf of Big Sur.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me state that the Los Padres National Forest is a national treasure warranting strong and balanced protection, and this is exactly what is provided by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of this bill, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2556, the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act. This legislation will provide important

new Federal protection to the sensitive resources of the Los Padres National Forest located along the central coast of California.

The House's consideration of this legislation has required a great deal of work and cooperation from a number of my colleagues and I would like to recognize these Members and thank them for their important contributions. Chairman Miller and Chairman Vento deserve special recognition for their assistance in having this legislation approved by the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, as do Chairman de la Garza and Chairman Volkmer for facilitating the Agriculture Committee's timely consideration of H.R. 2556. I would also like to recognize the principal sponsor of this legislation, Mr. Lagomarsino, for his leadership role in drafting this legislation.

Legislation similar to H.R. 2556 was approved by the House two times in the last Congress, but was never considered by the Senate due to unresolved differences between the two Senators from California. I am pleased that after many months of negotiations between myself, Senators Cranston and Seymour, Congressman Lagomarsino, Congressman Thomas, and Congressman Gallegly, an agreement on the Los Padres legislation has been reached. Compromise and concessions were made by all parties involved and I believe that the legislation agreed to achieves a balance between the need to provide strong environmental protection and allow for multiple uses of the forest's resources.

The Los Padres National Forest is perhaps the most ecologically significant resource of central California. The forest is home to many rare and endangered species such as the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and the California condor, and offers outstanding recreational opportunities for the residents of California as well.

In my own congressional district, the bill would add nearly 38,000 acres to the existing 167,700 acres Ventana Wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest. The areas in the Ventana addition include Bear Mountain, Black Butte, and Junipero Serra Peak. Furthermore, the bill would designate approximately 14,500 acres in the coastal Silver Peak Area as wilderness.

H.R. 2556 also makes additions to the wild and scenic rivers system within my congressional district. First, the legislation designates the Big Sur River as a wild and scenic river from its headwaters to the point at which it emerges from the Ventana Wilderness. Second, the bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to study the Little Sur River, from its headwaters to the Pacific Ocean, for possible inclusion in the wild and scenic rivers systems. As was included in the Los Padres Wilderness bill which passed the House last Congress, this legislation specifically directs the Secretary to consult with the Big Sur Multi-Agency Council during this study to ensure that local interests and concerns are recognized and reflected in the Forest Service's study. The Big Sur Multi-Agency Council has played a vital role in ensuring the proper management of the Big Sur Area and I believe that its participation in this study will be a benefit to both the Forest Service and the local residents.

The legislation also includes a mineral withdrawal clause for the Big Sur region which would prohibit the issuance of new minerals claims in this area. The mineral withdrawal clause would apply to approximately 100,000 acres of coastline and is strongly supported by the Forest Service, the California Coastal Commission and the local Big Sur community. This provision would provide important new protection to this treasured area and I am very pleased that it has been included in this legislation.

Finally, the bill includes a provision to name a redwood grove in the Silver Peak Wilderness Addition the "Nathaniel Owings Redwood Grove" in honor of the late Nathaniel Owings who was a renowned architect and a pioneer of efforts to preserve the integrity of the Big Sur coastline. It is largely because of Mr. Owings' efforts that the Big Sur coastline remains in a pristine state. Dedicating this coastal redwood grove in his name is a fitting tribute to this man and his years of hard work on behalf of Big Sur.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me state that the Los Padres National Forest is a national treasure warranting strong, yet balanced, protection. I encourage my colleagues to help us achieve that goal by supporting this legislation.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PANETTA. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Speaker, I did want to mention and recognize the contribution to this legislation of an environmentalist from Ventura County named Eugene Marshall who died not so long ago.

We, like the gentleman from California [Mr. Panetta], were able to honor him by naming a trail after him as the gentleman from California [Mr. Panetta] named a grove after Nathaniel Owings.

I want to rise today to again commend Mr. Marshall for his efforts on behalf of this legislation. He saw the need for balanced legislation. He did it, I might say at great personal cost, because his stand was not always that popular with some of his colleagues in some of the organizations to which he belonged.

Mr. Speaker, I just want his widow and others to know how much we appreciate what he did.

[*H9641] Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, of course I rose in support of this, and I would just point out that this is an exceptional measure, an important measure that has been worked on hard by the Members of the House, as well as the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and others, including the gentleman from California [Mr. Miller] and the gentleman from California [Mr. Levine].

Mr. Speaker, I think it is ironic that today I picked up one of the leading publications in the Nation and on the cover of it was questioning some of the problems that we are experiencing in the great State of California concerning the natural environment and other quality-of-life questions.

I must say I think this effort is a positive step forward, and we are doing a great deal here. Over half of the Los Padres National Forest will be declared wilderness with the passage of this act, as well as the preservation of various other parks.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is a State rich in natural and some cultural resources. I think we are taking a step here today, and I know there is much to do with regard to meeting the concerns that have arisen with regard to the resources of the State. But this is certainly a major step forward this week with regard to the House passage of this measure, and I would urge that action.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McNulty). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. Vento] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2556, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.