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Nature for All Joins Congress Members Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Salud Carbajal and Jared Huffman to Support Final House Vote to Preserve One Million Acres of Wilderness and Public Land in California
Protected Open Space Provides Mental Health and Wellness Benefits to Many Living in Urban Areas

Community volunteers and leaders from [Nature for All](#) joined four members of Congress today to support the imminent vote in the House of Representatives to approve a package of bills that will protect one million acres of public land and over 500 miles of rivers in California.

The public land that will be protected and preserved by the legislation provides many community benefits, including respite and tranquility for many people who live in dense urban areas and have limited access to enjoy nature in parks or other public outdoor spaces, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The San Gabriel Mountains provide 70% of the open space in Los Angeles County,” said **Nature for All Board Chair Thomas Wong**. “During this pandemic, we’ve all re-discovered the importance of our natural resources and open space for everyone in our community. Protecting and preserving the San Gabriel Mountains as a resource for current and future generations to enjoy is essential.”

The bills included in [The Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act \(H.R. 803\)](#) will safeguard public land in the San Gabriel Mountains, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Central Coast and Northwest California, in addition to public lands and rivers in Arizona, Colorado, and Washington.

Four key bills in the package that would protect and preserve public land in California are:

- San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act, Rep. Judy Chu (D-Pasadena)
- Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank)
- Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara)
- Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael)

“The San Gabriel Mountains, with their beautiful rivers, forests, and mountain trails so close to the density of Los Angeles, are a true gift to the millions who have little to no access to parks or green space,” said **Congresswoman Judy Chu**. “That is why I want to make sure as many people as possible

have the chance to visit, both today and for years in the future. That is what this vote will help accomplish. As our city grows and our climate changes, these untouched wild lands and habitats could disappear. The Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act will preserve and protect these lands for future generations and create a National Recreation Area to ensure that more Angelenos can access and experience all that these beautiful places have to offer."

"Los Angeles is one of the most park-poor regions in the country," said **Congressman Adam Schiff**. "For nearly twenty years, I've been working with my constituents to expand, preserve, and protect the space that surrounds the Los Angeles Basin. My legislation, The Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act, would expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to protect almost 200,000 acres of open space for generations to come. It is my hope that the House can pass this bill with bipartisan support as we did last Congress, and we will finally see this legislation through to the finish line."

The bills have each passed the House previously and the authors expect the package of bills to be approved by the full House this week. The Biden Administration announced [full support of the bill package](#) this week, giving added momentum to approval of the bills in the Senate following the House vote.

The preservation of the San Gabriel Mountains, Foothills and Rivers ensures that families will continue to have access to a treasured natural community resource.

"I grew up appreciating the beauty and tranquility of the San Gabriel Mountains, and am proud to have led the original effort to protect this precious resource for our community," said **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Hilda L. Solis, Supervisor to the First District**. "During this pandemic, local families have appreciated our natural resources and open spaces more than ever. I am delighted to see the tremendous momentum to not only further protect the San Gabriel Mountains, but also to protect public lands throughout California for future generations."

Many people and families of color, particularly in the Los Angeles region, live in crowded homes in dense urban neighborhoods, and have limited access to natural open space. As a result, they suffer from health problems including diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. Nature for All has various [leadership development programs](#) which are focused on working with families in low income and park poor communities to increase access and encourage families in urban areas to get out into nature by visiting the San Gabriel Mountains by organizing community hikes.

"In the Los Angeles area, so many families live in crowded apartments, kids spend a lot of time on video screens indoors, and they do not get much exposure to nature," **Ulmira Loza, a community leader and volunteer with Nature for All**. "When families visit the San Gabriel Mountains, they transform, becoming more relaxed and excited to explore and experience nature. It's so important to protect this natural resource for our community and future generations to enjoy."

Preservation of the San Gabriel Mountains, Foothills and Rivers ensures that all communities will continue to have access to fresh air and uncrowded open space on public land that is an essential mental health resource for many Californians.

“Having the privilege of living near the San Gabriel Mountains throughout this pandemic has just reinforced for me a truth - access to nature is and absolutely should be considered a very important, if not an essential part, of promoting a community's mental and physical health,” said **Krystle Yu, a graduate from the Nature for All Leadership Academy**. “Being able to spend time outdoors and in the mountains has been for me and my family one of the few reprieves from lockdown, and it is something that I want for all families and communities to have access to. Please support this bill that can further guarantee the community's access to the mountains and local greenways.”

“The experience of visiting national parks does wonders for veterans who come back from combat,” said **former U.S. Marine Josue Guerrero**. “Visiting the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains is mental health therapy for veterans. The experience they have being out in this precious open space is not only life changing, but lifesaving.”

“I represent some of the most beautiful places in America. The Los Padres National Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument in my district contain some of the most stunning and diverse ecosystems found anywhere in Northern America,” said **Congressman Salud Carbajal**. “This package, which includes my Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, will help us preserve our public lands for future generations, combat climate change, and bolster our economy. I urge my colleagues to pass this critical legislation.”

“This legislation is focused on a future for Northwest California where public lands are resilient, the outdoor recreation economy grows, and communities thrive in a healthy environment,” said **Congressman Jared Huffman**. “I’m really proud of what we’ve accomplished, grateful to be a part of this group of leaders who recognize the immense value of public lands for all Californians, and I’m looking forward to getting this bill across the finish line this Congress.”

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