



Northern California Wilderness Bill Introduced in Congress January 21, 2005

WASHINGTON - Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (both D-Calif.) reintroduced the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act in the Senate today. Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Napa Valley) introduced the bill in the House earlier this month on the first day of the 109th Congress (January 4, 2005).

"We drafted this bill in a bipartisan manner, it's supported by numerous individuals, businesses and organizations in the First District and throughout California," Thompson said. "This bill will protect some of California's most treasured lands for generations to come."

Senator Boxer said, "This legislation will help preserve and protect more than 300,000 acres of California wilderness for future generations, including some of the most magnificent areas in our state. Last year, we were able to pass this bill in the Senate. I am hopeful that with the continuing hard work of my colleagues, Senator Feinstein and Congressman Thompson, we will be able to see this important legislation signed into law this year."

"The King Range is one of our state's most striking and beautiful environmental jewels," Senator Feinstein said. "That's why I am so pleased to be a part of the effort to permanently preserve 300,000 acres along California's northern coast including the King Range. Our wildlands are vanishing. We need to preserve what's left. This bill takes an important step toward that goal. My great thanks go to Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson for their leadership on this issue."

The bill would designate over 300,000 acres of public land in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, and Napa Counties as wilderness. It would also designate the Black Butte River in Mendocino County as a wild and scenic river. However it will not close any existing roads, nor will it encompass any private lands or alter any grazing rights.

The sponsors of the legislation worked with the Bush Administration, Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) to address any concerns with the legislation. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on December 7, 2004. However, since the House ran out of time to pass the bill before the end of the 108th Congress both the House and the Senate will have to pass it in the 109th Congress.

"I would like to thank Sen. Boxer and Sen. Feinstein for their work in moving this legislation through the Senate," Thompson said. "I look forward to having a hearing on the bill before the House Resources Committee in the coming months."