



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Approves
Feinstein Bill to Expand Role of Youth Conservation Corps
September 28, 2005

Washington, DC – The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today unanimously approved legislation sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Pete Domenici (R-NM), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) that would expand the role of an existing youth land corps, allowing them to work on hazardous fuels reduction and disaster prevention and relief projects.

“I began the first urban youth corps when I was the Mayor of San Francisco. This program gave thousands of young people a sense of personal pride, helped to connect them with their community and allowed them to see for themselves that hard work pays off,” Senator Feinstein said. **“This bill would build upon that success and give disadvantaged young people across the country the same opportunities that San Franciscans have had for two decades.”**

Specifically, the bill would:

- Authorize the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with qualified corps to perform appropriate conservation projects, assist governments and Indian tribes in performing research and public education associated with natural and cultural resources, introduce young people to public service and expand their educational opportunities, and stimulate interest among the nation’s youth in careers in conservation and land management.
- When carrying out a priority project in a specific area, the Secretaries are directed to establish a preference for contracting with any corps within that specific area that has a substantial portion of members who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged.
- Identify a series of priority projects for corps to carry out including the restoration and protection of public lands threatened by severe fire, insect or disease infestation or other damaging agents; the protection, restoration, or enhancement of forest ecosystem components to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species; the improvement of biological diversity; and, the enhancement of productivity and carbon sequestration.
- Authorize \$15 million per year -- \$10 million would go the priority projects identified in the bill and \$5 million would go for non-priority projects.

Companion legislation, which was introduced by Representatives Greg Walden (R-OR) and Tom Udall (D-NM), was approved by the House Resources Committee earlier this year.