



Senators Feinstein and Boxer Urge Senate Opposition to House Measure to Limit Public Access to Santa Rosa Island

- Senators Boxer and Feinstein oppose measure by House Armed Services Committee to transform Santa Rosa Island into private game preserve for the military -

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Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) are urging the Senate to firmly oppose a proposal by Representative Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) to limit public access to Santa Rosa Island. The island is part of the Channel Islands National Park, located off the coast of Southern California.

“Santa Rosa Island is home to rare and endangered species of island birds and fox, beautiful fields of wildflowers, rocky tidal pools, unique fossils, and Chumash sandstone carvings. It’s critical that the National Parks Service is allowed to do its job and protect this integral part of California’s historical and natural heritage,” Senator Feinstein said. **“Senator Boxer and I will do everything we can to oppose any effort to turn Santa Rosa Island into a private hunting reserve for only members of the armed services, veterans and their guests. I support recreational activities for our troops and veterans, but I believe that all taxpayers alike deserve the right to enjoy this local recreational retreat.”**

“As part of our National Park system, Santa Rosa Island is a natural treasure that belongs to all of us – and its access to the public should not be limited,” Senator Boxer said. **“I will be working with my colleague Senator Feinstein to ensure that this misguided plan does not become reality.”**

“I commend Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer for introducing this resolution that recognizes the importance of Santa Rosa Island and the Channel Islands National Park,” said Representative Lois Capps (D-Calif.), who represents the coastal area where the islands are located. **“The continued attempts to kick the public off the Island and continue indefinitely the trophy hunting of non-native deer and elk on Santa Rosa is a terrible idea and I have been working hard to stop it. The Senators were critical in killing this plan when it surfaced late last year and I am grateful for their continued help to keep Santa Rosa open for future generations.”**

Earlier this week, the House Armed Services Committee, which Representative Hunter chairs, voted in favor of his proposal that would limit public access to the island by extending the current practice of allowing privately organized deer and elk hunting expeditions. These hunts

require the closure of about 90% of the island to the general public for about 4-5 months each year.

The measure would also prevent the National Park Service from carrying out a court-approved settlement to remove non-native deer and elk from Santa Rosa Island by 2011. The deer and elk herds pose a threat to the island's 11 endangered species, including the bald eagle, rare plants, and native birds and fox.

In response, Senators Feinstein and Boxer have introduced a Senate resolution that would allow for continued public access to Santa Rosa Island and would ensure that the National Park Service is allowed to properly manage and administer Santa Rosa Island in accordance with its policies and regulations. Today, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks announced that it will host a hearing on this issue on Tuesday, May 16 at 2:30 p.m.

Twice before, Representative Hunter has unsuccessfully tried to transform the Island into a trophy hunt preserve available only to members of the armed services, veterans, and their guests.

Santa Rosa Island

Channel Islands National Monument was designated in 1938 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt under the authority of the Antiquities Act. The monument was expanded to include additional islands and redesignated as Channel Islands National Park in 1980 in order to protect the nationally significant natural, scenic, wildlife, marine, ecological, archaeological, cultural, and scientific values of the Channel Islands in California.

Santa Rosa Island was acquired by the United States in 1986 for approximately \$30 million for the purpose of restoring its native ecology and making the island available to the public for recreational uses. The previous owners of the island retained only the right to use a 7 and one-half acre parcel of land through 2011.

There are 11 endangered or threatened plant and animal species on the island, many of which would be harmed by the continued presence of the non-native elk and deer population. Under a court-approved settlement, the deer and elk were to be removed from the park by 2011.

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