



Comments on California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act

Eva Soltes, Founder and Director of Harrison House Music & Arts

"The stunning vistas, abundant wildlife, starry night skies and spectacular rock formations of the California desert are a source of inspiration for countless artists and visitors who are the foundation of our cultural and recreational tourism economy. Protecting our fragile desert lands respects our rich history of artistic expression, outstanding recreational opportunities and supports local businesses and artists."

Peter Spurr, Joshua Tree Realty

"Over the course of my career, I have come to realize that my real estate business depends on Joshua Tree National Park and other protected lands and the scores of visitors they draw. The allure of our national parks, wildernesses and other public lands are impressive--their expansive beauty and hundred-mile views bring visitors to our area year-round. Often times these newly-enchanted people will stop into my realty office before returning home; these visits frequently end with my finding and selling them a weekend desert-getaway. Protecting our public lands is a great investment in future generations so they can enjoy the same abundant wildlife, rich archaeological and historic sites and outstanding recreational opportunities, but it also makes good economic sense."

Miriam Seger, owner of Rustic Modern Rentals in Joshua Tree California.

"As the owner of boutique vacation rentals in the Mojave Desert, I host some of the 1.6 million tourists who visit Joshua Tree National Park annually. With their economic support, I've been able to rehabilitate a number of derelict properties in our economically depressed county, and in turn offer lodging for those who arrive from around the world seeking the transformative experience of clean air and open spaces. My guests excitedly share their images of wildlife, wildflowers, sunsets and star-filled nights via social media and photo sharing websites. Creating new desert national monuments, adding lands to our national parks and designating new wilderness areas benefits species, recreationists and small business owners like myself."

Mark Butler, former Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Park

"As the former Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Park, I fully understand the critical importance of the California Conservation and Recreation Act (CDCRA) for protecting the unique ecology of the California desert, for enhancing the experience of adventurers, visitors and families who enjoy the desert, and for improving the recreational economy associated with the National Parks and other public lands located in the California desert. With its passage, the CDCRA will provide for conservation of lands in or adjacent to all three California desert national park units, including Death Valley, Mojave Preserve and Joshua Tree. It will designate sizable, appropriate and high quality locations for off road vehicle activities. It will support ongoing military training occurring in the desert that is necessary to protect national security. Also, it will help to protect the scenic values of the unique and complex Mojave desert landscape that has been identified as one of the 100 most scenic places in the world. It is clear that all of these elements will resolve many longstanding land use conflicts and have a tremendous positive influence on conservation based tourism and recreation in the California desert region."

"For more than 37 years with the National Park Service, I've seen that the establishment of our desert national parks required consistent political leadership, extensive debate, and artful compromise. The CDCRA has required nothing less. Overtime, with positive leadership, it has gained widespread support from conservationists, off road vehicle enthusiasts, veterans, national park visitors, businesses and others who all would like to see desert based land use conflicts resolved. Now is the time for our elected representatives to come together and pass this legislation."

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