

THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT EXPANSION ACT

MRS. BOXER: Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce the *California Coastal National Monument Expansion Act*, legislation that would expand the current Monument to include about 6,200 acres of pristine public lands across four California counties. I am proud to be joined in this effort by my friend from California, Senator Dianne Feinstein.

In 2000, President Clinton made history when he designated the California Coastal National Monument, which stretches the entire 1,100 miles of California's coastline and protects more than 20,000 small islands, rocks, exposed reefs and islands between Mexico and Oregon. It also protects the habitat for a variety of wildlife including seabirds, California sea lions and southern sea otters.

In 2012, I introduced legislation with Senator Feinstein and Congressman Mike Thompson to expand the Monument to include the Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands in Mendocino County. We were grateful when President Obama took action last year to add these spectacular lands as the first onshore addition to the Monument.

The legislation we are introducing today would expand the California Coastal National Monument again to include five more onshore sites, creating a new network of federal coastal properties for the public to enjoy. By highlighting these sites, the measure would also boost tourism and the economy of communities up and down the coast.

Each one of these new areas is unique, with its own rugged landscape, its own majestic views of the Pacific Ocean and its own history. Each piece tells us part of the fascinating story of the development of California and our nation.

In Humboldt County, one of my state's northern most counties, this legislation would protect Trinidad Head – 13 acres of rocky shoreline which offers visitors breathtaking views of offshore sea stacks and the City of Trinidad, the oldest town on the northern California coast. The land is also home to the historic Trinidad Head lighthouse, which dates back to 1871 when it helped guide vessels carrying lumber up and down the Redwood Coast.

The Lost Coast Headlands in Humboldt County would also be included, providing visitors access to 440 acres of some of the most spectacular scenery in northern California. From alpine forests and rolling mountains to coastal bluffs south of the mouth of the Eel River, this area offers a little something for every outdoor enthusiast, whether it is hiking, bird watching or beachcombing. These lands also played an important role during the Cold War when the U.S. Navy opened a post there to monitor Soviet submarines.

The Monument would be expanded to encompass Lighthouse Ranch, about 11 miles south of Eureka, which sits on eight acres of a former U.S. Coast Guard station once used as a Christian commune. Today, it offers breathtaking, panoramic views of the Eel River Delta, Humboldt Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Drive about 350 miles south of Humboldt County to Santa Cruz County and you will discover the Cotoni-Coast Dairies – 5,780 acres of former dairy and cement plant lands. Its name is a nod to the Cotoni Indians, who lived there for thousands of years, and the Swiss dairy

farmers who ran the land as a farm and ranch for much of the 20th century. The area, which would also be included in the Monument, draws in visitors with its redwoods, coastal grasslands, foothills and watersheds that flow directly into the northern Monterey Bay.

The bill would also preserve Piedras Blancas – 20 acres with 425 state-owned acres cooperatively managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Big Sur. Named for three white rocks just off the end of the point, the area is well-known for its historic 19th century lighthouse and is also an important ecological research area. Tourists come to catch a glimpse of a beautiful landscape untouched by development and see wildlife like Elephant Seals, sea lions and sea birds.

Additionally our legislation would protect one offshore site – a group of small rocks and islands off the coast of Orange County. Back in the 1930s, the Coast Guard considered using these properties for lighthouses, but the agency now agrees they should be permanently protected as part of the National Monument. Under this bill, these amazing rocks and islands will remain a pristine part of California's natural heritage.

These are some of the most magnificent lands in the country, and we have a responsibility to protect them for current and future generations. That is why expanding the California Coastal National Monument is so critical.

The new designation would permanently protect each site from development and would ensure stronger protections for a diverse array of wildlife that call the area home, many of which are endangered. It would also help restore habitats and protect water quality by placing these properties under one management plan to allow for better coordination of available resources.

Expanding the Monument is not just good for our conservation efforts – it is also good for the economy. Each of these natural treasures showcases the breathtaking coastlines and recreational opportunities that draw visitors from California and across the world.

Listen to the numbers from these three California counties: In Humboldt County, tourism is responsible for more than \$330 million every year. In Santa Cruz County, tourism brings in more than \$700 million every year and is one of the county's top industries. And tourism in San Luis Obispo County produces more than \$1 billion annually and is also the county's largest industry, supporting 15,570 jobs in 2011.

Designating these sites as part of the National Monument will not only generate more economic activity, it will help attract increased resources to support the needs of the area, including additional conservation programs.

The expansion of this National Monument has strong support from a large coalition of local governments, elected officials, business owners, landowners, farmers, private individuals, and many conservation and outdoor industry groups. This impressive grassroots effort shows how deeply our citizens care about the future of these public lands, and I am proud to support their hard work and commitment.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill to expand the California Coastal National Monument and help protect these spectacular lands for generations to come.