



November 19, 2019

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chair
The Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee

Re: California sportsmen and women support the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act (H.R. 2250), the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 2199), and the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 2215).

Dear Chair Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Committee:

Productive habitat is the most critical variable for fishing and hunting, and the vast majority of the habitats that provide California's coldwater fishing and upland game hunting opportunities are found on public lands. California's recreational fishing opportunities alone are worth some \$4.415 billion annually and support the economy of many rural communities. It is vitally important to conserve and protect these habitats and the sporting opportunities and economic benefits they provide.

Trout Unlimited (TU) therefore supports three bills: H.R. 2250, the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act; H.R. 2199, the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act; and H.R. 2215, the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act.

Among the dozens of other sportsmen's organizations and businesses that also support one or all of these bills are the California Council of Trout Unlimited, all of TU's twelve local chapters in California, the Southwest and Northern California Councils of Fly Fishers International, California Trout, the Fly Shop, Lost Coast Outfitters, Clearwater Lodge on the Pit River, and the Fisherman's Spot.

The benefits of H.R. 2250, H.R. 2199, and H.R. 2215 for sportsmen and women are many. In particular, we highlight and endorse:

- The provisions of H.R. 2250 that would address some of the primary current threats to the world-class fishing and hunting opportunities in northwest California, including the increase in uncharacteristically severe wildfire, threats to water quality and habitat from illegal marijuana cultivation, and the need for new and improved recreational infrastructure. This legislation will help protect and restore some of the most famous steelhead and salmon fisheries in the world, including the Trinity, Eel, Mad and Mattole Rivers, as well as some of the best blacktail deer hunting grounds in California, through a combination of new land and water designations and landscape restoration and wildfire threat reduction activities.
- The provisions of H.R. 2199 that would confer federal Wild and Scenic River designation on 159 miles of central coast streams, and encourage the development of new and repair of existing recreation infrastructure. Wild and Scenic River designation will help conserve coldwater habitats and fishing opportunities in a semi-arid region where the lower portions of coastal watersheds often dry back in the summer and where there are few coldwater fishing

opportunities. Sespe and Piru Creeks in the Los Padres National Forest, in particular, would benefit from Wild and Scenic River designation—these creeks are two of only three state-designated Wild Trout streams in southern California and Sespe Creek supports a population of southern steelhead – one of the few remaining between Santa Maria and San Diego.

- The provisions of H.R. 2215 that would designate as Wild and Scenic River nearly 26 miles of the north, west, and east forks of the San Gabriel River. The upper reaches of the San Gabriel River harbor wild trout with remnant southern steelhead genetics—the southern steelhead is one of the rarest native fishes in California and is presently listed as Endangered under the ESA. Moreover, WSR designation ensures that fishing will remain a recognized use of these resources and will better conserve the habitat values that are the basis for the coldwater angling opportunities found here (in a region with few such opportunities).

Many TU members and other sportsmen and women enjoy fishing and hunting on the public lands and waters that would be better conserved through enactment of these three measures. They also use these resources for such purposes as youth education, fishing instruction, and civic service outings that support veterans, cancer survivors, under-represented demographics and other people and communities that find healing and new perspectives through such support. Permanently protecting the outstanding recreational, scenic, and habitat values of California’s watersheds is key to sustaining our sporting heritage and the ability of our citizens and communities to connect with nature. We strongly encourage passage of these locally-built bills.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Kate Miller



Director, Government Affairs
kate.miller@tu.org

Brian Johnson



Director, California Program
brian.johnson@tu.org