

DRAFT

October 14, 2015

**RE: Permanently Protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and Enhancing Recreational Opportunities for Kids, Families and Everyone**

Dear San Gabriel Mountains Forever:

The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council recognizes that the San Gabriel Mountains are an irreplaceable natural resource and the iconic backdrop to our foothill communities. Our National Forest lands supply us with drinking water, support our outdoor-oriented lifestyles and enhance our property values. They provide habitat for numerous plant and animals and a place for families and kids – all of us -- to connect with nature.

We understand that the new San Gabriel Mountains National Monument has already generated improvements within the National Monument. Chronic problems are beginning to be addressed by the Forest Service as it hires more staff, re-opens visitor centers, improves trash pickup and gets more rangers in the field. National recognition of our local mountains has moved them up as a funding priority and has attracted millions of dollar in private funding to do more. We believe that the National Monument and its benefits should be extended to the National Forest land above Sunland, Tujunga and La Crescenta and throughout the San Gabriel Mountain range. Over the next few years a management plan for our new National Monument is being written with public input. We are hopeful that the plan will address the potential environmental damage of three proposed high speed rail routes through our mountains and oppose their construction.

We join you in supporting the establishment of additional Wilderness Areas in the Angeles National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains National Monument to better protect our pristine, totally undeveloped National Forest backcountry and Wild & Scenic Rivers to protect our watersheds. No one can make new wilderness and open space; we can only better protect what we have. Wilderness Areas are managed to preserve their natural character forever, preserving habitat for wildlife and wild nature for human being to enjoy. Wilderness Areas allow for no infrastructure, prohibiting everything from roads to high speed rail.

We join San Gabriel Mountains Forever in asking Congress to take the appropriate actions to better protect the San Gabriel Mountains and to enhance recreational opportunities.

Sincerely,

Mark Seigel,  
President,  
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council