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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

California Senators Introduce Measure to Ban Oil Drilling in Los Padres National Forest February 20, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein has joined with U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) in an effort to protect the Los Padres National Forest from future oil drilling.

“The Los Padres National Forest is both an environmental treasure and one of the most popular recreation spots in California. It should not be spoiled by new oil drilling,” Senator Feinstein said.

Feinstein noted that the Los Padres National Forest receives more than 3.5 million visitors annually and also serves as home to 20 threatened or endangered plants and animals, including the California condor.

Though 48 percent of the forest is set aside as wilderness area – and thus protected from any development – the U.S. Forest Service has been considering whether to allow oil drilling in the unprotected areas of the forest since 2001.

In December 2001, the U.S. Forest Service released a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) proposing the lease of up to 760,000 acres of the Los Padres National Forest for oil and gas development. Since the release of the draft EIS, the Forest Service has repeatedly delayed issuing a final ruling. In April, however, it is expected to approve oil drilling in the Los Padres.

The measure, S. 2067, was introduced by Senator Boxer and co-sponsored by Senator Feinstein on February 11, 2004. Similar legislation has been introduced by Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) in the House.

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