

Protecting California's Desert



*Ensuring Responsible Land Use
in the Mojave Desert*

The 1994 Desert Protection Act



Senator Feinstein was the lead sponsor of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act, which protected more than 9.6 million acres of California desert.

The 1994 California Desert Protection Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on October 31, 1994. It was the largest land conservation designation in the continental United States, protecting more than 9.6 million acres of desert and establishing the Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks and the Mojave Natural Preserve.

Some of the law's key provisions:

- Added 1.3 million acres of land to the existing Death Valley National Monument and redesignated the monument a National Park, with a total of 3.4 million acres.
- Added 234,000 acres of land to the existing Joshua Tree National Monument and redesignated the area a National Park, with a total of 800,000 acres.
- Established a new 1.6 million acre Mojave National Preserve.
- Designated nearly 3.6 million acres of desert administered by the Bureau of Land Management as wilderness.
- Transferred 20,500 acres of BLM land to the state of California to expand the Red Rock Canyon State Park.

The 1994 Desert Protection Act

At the time, the passage of the California Desert Protection Act was hailed as a boon for California and the country:

“Passage of the California Desert Bill is a clear cut victory for the people of California and everyone across America who cares about this nation’s great natural heritage.”

-- President Clinton

“This is America’s most significant environmental victory in more than a decade. The people of this country will now have lasting protection of natural and cultural resources overlooked for far too long”

-- Interior Secretary Babbitt

“The California Desert is going to become a crown jewel in the nation’s park system.”

-- Senator Boxer

“My main objective from the start was to give necessary protection to the California desert that continues to erode day after day, and also permit current uses of the desert to continue in certain areas. I firmly believe the California Desert Protection Act will be a boon for our state’s economy. With increased tourism and recreational areas, the state cannot help but be more attractive to vacationers around the country and around the world.”

-- Senator Feinstein

“The law, which turns 20 years old this year, is one of my proudest accomplishments in the Senate.”

-- Senator Feinstein



Building Upon the Legacy of 1994

Senator Feinstein will introduce the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act in 2015.



In January 2015, Senator Feinstein will introduce the ***California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act***.

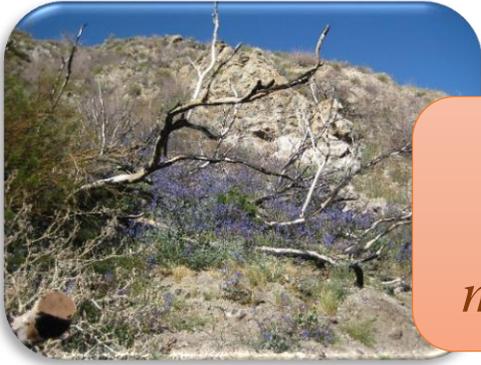
What are the competing priorities for desert lands?

The California desert is a unique and special place that must be managed to meet a wide variety of needs. Various groups advocate for different land uses. Among those competing priorities:

- Conservation purposes and the protection of habitat for threatened and endangered species.
- Solar and wind energy facilities and transmission lines.
- Off-road and other recreation activities.

There is a need to manage this land in a responsible manner and balance these priorities. This bill is designed to help manage California's desert resources with an approach that carefully balances conservation, recreation, renewable energy development and other uses.

California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act Conservation Provisions



The bill includes 1.5 million acres of new conservation, the majority in two new monuments.

Mojave Trails National Monument

This monument would cover approximately **942,000 acres of land**. This includes approximately 196,000 acres of the former Catellus-owned land, which was donated or purchased by the federal government for conservation purposes over the last decade.

This land includes iconic sweeping desert vistas, majestic mountain ranges and critical wildlife corridors. The monument would maintain existing recreation uses and while also allowing for renewable energy transmission.

Sand to Snow National Monument

This monument would encompass **135,000 acres of land** between Joshua Tree National Park and the San Bernardino National Forest, from the desert floor in the Coachella Valley to the top of Mount San Gorgonio.

It would also protect 23.6 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail and the habitat for approximately 240 species of migrating and breeding birds. This area would be the most environmentally diverse national monument in the country, and is one of the most important wildlife corridors in Southern California.

This monument would maintain the existing recreation uses and would be jointly managed by BLM and the Forest Service, with an advisory committee of stakeholders.

California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act Conservation Provisions

The bill would add adjacent lands to Joshua Tree and Death Valley National Parks and the Mojave National Preserve:

- 39,000 acres added to Death Valley National Park.
- Almost 30,000 acres added to the Mojave National Preserve.
- An additional 4,500 acres to Joshua Tree National Park.

This bill would also:

- Designate 77 miles of waterways as Wild and Scenic Rivers, including Deep Creek and Whitewater River in and near the San Bernardino National Forest and the Amargosa River and Surprise Canyon Creek in and near Death Valley National Park.
- Designate five new BLM wilderness areas, covering approximately 250,000 acres of wilderness near Fort Irwin.
- Establish 18,840 acres of the Alabama Hills National Scenic Area in Inyo County, protecting the iconic western landscape at the foothills of Mount Whitney.
- Require the Interior Department to take additional steps to protect areas in San Bernardino and Imperial County containing petroglyphs and other cultural resources.

*Future generations will thank
us for setting this land aside.*



California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act Other Provisions

Addressing the need to balance recreational activities and renewable energy production with conservation and wildlife protection.



The draft bill balances conservation with other priorities like recreation and energy development.

- The bill designates four existing BLM Off-Highway Vehicle areas (135,000 acres) as permanent OHV recreation areas, providing certainty that these uses will be protected in ways similar to conservation areas.
- The bill requires the Department of the Interior to exchange 370,000 acres of federal land for state land, allowing California to use these areas for commercial purposes including clean energy.
- Revenue generated from leasing of federal land within the desert would be shared with state and local governments.

California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act Map Overview

