

## Calendar No. 574

107TH CONGRESS }  
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT  
107-257

### RIM OF THE VALLEY CORRIDOR STUDY ACT

SEPTEMBER 9, 2002.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

### R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 2571]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 2571) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Rim of the Valley Corridor as a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and an amendment to the title and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendments are as follows:

1. Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act”.

#### SEC. 2. RIM OF THE VALLEY CORRIDOR STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (in this Act referred to as the “Secretaries”) shall conduct a joint special resource study of the lands, waters, and interests of the area comprising the Rim of the Valley Corridor in Southern California, as depicted on the map entitled “SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY ZONE—RIM OF THE VALLEY CORRIDOR Parklands and Open Space” and dated July 30, 2002.

(b) STUDY TOPICS.—The study shall evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the area as a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area.

(c) CRITERIA.—In conducting the study authorized by this section, the Secretaries shall use the criteria for the study for areas for potential inclusion in the National Park System contained in section 8(c) of Public Law 91–383 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5(c)).

(d) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study authorized by this section, the Secretaries shall consult with appropriate State, county and local government entities.

#### SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such funds as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.”

2. Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a joint special resources study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Rim of the Valley Corridor as a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and for other purposes.”

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 2571, as ordered reported, is to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a joint special resources study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Rim of the Valley Corridor as a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Southern California.

#### BACKGROUND AND NEED

S. 2571 directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to study the Rim of the Valley Corridor, the escarpment of the San Gabriel Mountains in southern California primarily within the Angeles National Forest, as a possible addition to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The Santa Monica Mountains N.R.A. is the largest urban unit of the National Park System, comprising more than 150,000 acres near Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean.

The Rim of the Valley Corridor contains parts of an endangered habitat area, the Mediterranean chaparral ecosystem. Nearby mountains also provide notable recreation opportunities and a haven from the noise and commotion of the Los Angeles Basin. The State of California has adopted the Rim of the Valley Master Plan submitted by the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy, but State and local efforts to protect the area have been hampered by a lack of financial resources and resource management expertise.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 2571 was introduced by Senator Feinstein on May 23, 2002. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on S. 2571 on July 18, 2002. At its business meeting on July 31, 2002, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 2571, as amended, favorably reported.

#### COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on July 31, 2002, by a voice vote of a quorum presented, recommends that the Senate pass S. 2571, if amended as described herein.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During the consideration of S. 2571 the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute which clarifies that the Forest Service and the National Park Service should participate jointly in the study of the proposed addition. The amendment is explained in detail in the section-by-section analysis, below. The Committee also adopted an amendment to the title.

## SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

*Section 1* entitles the bill the “Rim of the Valley Corridor study Act.”

*Section 2* directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a joint special resource study, sets forth requirements and criteria for conducting the study and consultation with affected governmental entities.

*Section 3* authorizes the appropriations of such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

## COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of the cost of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, August 7, 2002.*

Hon. JEFF BINGAMAN,  
*Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,*  
*U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 2571, the Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Megan Carroll.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON  
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

*S. 2571—Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act*

S. 2571 would direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to study the suitability and feasibility of adding certain federal lands to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California. Based on information from the Department of the Interior, CBO estimates that the proposed study would cost about \$500,000 in 2003, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting S. 2571 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

S. 2571 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Megan Carroll. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

## REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 2571. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of impos-

ing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 2571, as ordered reported.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

On, July 30, 2002, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources requested legislative reports from the Department of the Interior and the Office of Management and Budget setting forth Executive agency recommendations on S. 2571. These reports had not been received at the time the report on S. 2571 was filed. When the reports become available, the Chairman will request that they be printed in the Congressional Record for the advice of the Senate. The testimony provided by the Department of the Interior at the Subcommittee hearing follows:

#### STATEMENT OF DURAND JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this bill to study the Rim of the Valley in the Los Angeles region. S. 2571 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Rim of the Valley Corridor as a unit of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The Department does not oppose this bill. However, because the study area includes a significant amount of U.S. Forest Service lands, we believe that the bill should be amended to authorize a joint study with the Department of Agriculture. The Department did not request additional funding for this study in Fiscal Years 2003. We believe that any funding requested should be directed towards completing previously authorized studies. Presently, there are 34 studies pending, of which we expect to transmit 4 to Congress by the end of 2002. To meet the President's Initiative to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog, we must continue to focus our resources on caring for existing areas in the National Park System. Thus, we have concerns about adding new funding requirements for new park units, national trails, wild and scenic rivers or heritage areas at the same time that we are trying to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. As such, the Department will identify all acquisition, one time and operational costs of the proposed site. At this time, those costs are unknown.

Senator Boxer also has introduced S. 1865, a bill to evaluate and study the suitability and feasibility of nearby lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River Watersheds. These bills affect nearly adjacent territories in the Los Angeles Basin and affect nearly identical large constituencies. As any study would include a public involvement component, combining the planning effort to evaluate

both areas would not only be less confusing to the public but also more cost-effective for the government. Since a study of the Rim of the Valley is estimated to cost approximately \$500,000 there could be considerable efficiencies gained by combining and narrowing the focus of these two proposed studies.

A combined study would assess habitat quality, access to urban open space, low impact recreation and educational uses, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection and watershed improvements along the rivers and watersheds as well as the Rim of the Valley corridor surrounding the San Fernando and La Crescenta Valleys. This latter corridor consists of portions of the Santa Monica Mountains, Santa Susanna Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, San Rafael Hills and the connector to Los Padres, Angeles, and San Bernardino National Forests.

Properties on the National Register of Historic Places are found within this area. Old stagecoach stops and images of the Wild West still exist. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is located within the Simi Hills. Amtrak's Coast Starlight line travels past many of these rich cultural and natural motifs. The area supports a diverse system of plants and animals, including 26 distinct plant communities and over 400 vertebrate species.

The National Park Service has some familiarity with this region and watersheds. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area provides protection for 153,750 acres while providing recreational opportunities for approximately 530,000 visitors annually.

A study would outline public-private partnerships, which are core to preserving large tracts of open space such as are included in this study and which have been successful in the protection of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area since it was authorized 25 years ago.

The Department feels that the provision in S. 2571 that establishes a 17-member advisory commission is unnecessary. Any Special Resource Study undertaken by the National Park Service will entail extensive public outreach with members of the public and local governments, extended comment periods, and more complex analyses because issues and options in a large, urban area with such a diverse and extensive group of stakeholders at all levels of government would be considered.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this issue and I would be willing to answer any questions you may have on the issue.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAWS

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill S. 2571, as ordered reported.