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October 6, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing to urge the Department of the Interior (Department) to formally recognize the nationally significant character of the Fort Ord Public Lands managed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

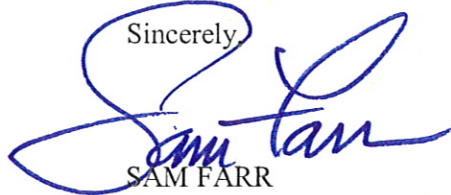
As you know, Fort Ord was one of the most significant U.S. Army training bases during the Twentieth Century. After the Department of Defense moved most of its Army mission away from Fort Ord in 1994, the BLM was selected to manage as open space just over 15,000 acres of the base's 24,000 acre footprint. The BLM is currently managing 7,500 acres of that amount. The Army will transfer the balance of that property upon clearing the property of unexploded ordinance. Collectively, these properties are known at the Fort Ord Public Lands.

The Fort Ord Public Lands support a beautiful and diverse group of plant and animal communities, including 35 species of rare plants and animals along with their native coastal habitats. For many of the rare plants, 50-90% of their worldwide habitat occurs in Ft. Ord. These lush landscapes are home to a range of wildlife including: mountain lion, black-tailed deer, bobcats, coyotes, badger, turkeys, golden eagle, red tailed hawks, Canada geese, California quail, coast horned lizards, and gopher snakes. I have worked closely with the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FOR A), the surrounding land use jurisdictions, various regulatory agencies, and the BLM to ensure the long term conservation and public enjoyment of these natural resources.

The Fort Ord Public Lands offer 86 miles of trail on 7,200 acres open every day from dawn to dusk for hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders, wildlife/wildflower photographers, and nature enthusiasts. Fort Ord's single track trails, grassland hills and oak woodlands are surrounded by development and offer some of the most remarkable open space in the Monterey Bay area. They also lie adjacent to many miles of preserves, coastal dunes, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge, the Gabilan and Santa Lucia mountain ranges, and the unparalleled agricultural bounty of the Salinas Valley.

I believe that The Fort Ord Lands warrant the added recognition and protection that National Monument designation would provide and urge you to so designate them.

Sincerely,



SAM FARR
Member of Congress