

# Help protect communities near the Los Padres National Forest

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This website is to inform people who live near the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey County California about problems with the proposed Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act, and to suggest how it can be improved.

Unchanged, the bill threatens lives, homes and communities. With changes, the bill could help protect communities from wildfires and solve other problems. The goal is to inform and motivate you to advocate for changes to the bill, and to help you do that. Some proposed changes would benefit communities on all sides of the Los Padres, others are specific to the Big Sur coast.

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- [Click here to see, on one page, all of the changes this website proposes to the bill.](#)
- [Click here to see what Congressman Farr says the bill would do.](#)

## Status Of The Bill

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To redesignate the Monterey Ranger District of Los Padres National Forest in the State of California as the Big Sur Management Unit, to transfer certain Bureau of Land Management land for inclusion in the management unit, to adjust the boundaries of the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas, to designate segments of Arroyo Seco River, Big Creek, Carmel River, San Antonio River, San Carpoforo Creek, and their tributaries as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FARR introduced the following bill, which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

**A BILL**

To redesignate the Monterey Ranger District of Los Padres National Forest in the State of California as the Big Sur Management Unit, to transfer certain Bureau of Land Management land for inclusion in the management unit, to adjust the boundaries of the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas, to designate segments of Arroyo Seco River, Big Creek, Carmel River, San Antonio River, San Carpoforo Creek, and their tributaries as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes.

The bill was introduced during the last session of Congress, however Congress did not act on it. Congressman Farr has indicated he intends to reintroduce the bill. You can read the latest public draft of the bill (March 12, 2011) [by clicking here](#).

Congressman Farr said he wanted to hear concerns people in affected communities have with the bill before he reintroduces it, and indicated he was willing to change the bill based on what he heard.

A meeting was held on June 18, 2011 for Congressman Farr to receive community input. Unfortunately, Congressman Farr indicated at the meeting he would not be willing to incorporate critical changes requested by people who live in communities affected by the bill. More will be added on this later.

It continues to be important for people in communities around the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey County to become informed on the issues discussed on this website.

It appears that community concerns will need to be communicated directly to Congress during hearings should the bill be introduced and acted on. Many voices will be needed. Please add yours. [Click here to learn how you can join in the effort and easy ways you can help.](#)

## Critical Problems With The Bill

**Wildfires, Wilderness, Firebreaks, Lives and Homes** As currently written, the bill, combined with previous federal legislation, would increase the likelihood that lives and homes will be lost to wildfires. This problem affects communities surrounding the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey County, including Big Sur, White Rock, Carmel Valley, Cachagua, Reliz Canyon, Pine Canyon and more. To read more about this problem, with proposed solutions, [click here](#). To go straight to a page with all proposed solutions, [click here](#).

**Buyout of Big Sur by the US Forest Service** The Big Sur area was settled before California became a state and before the US Forest Service was created. However, since 1986, various government agencies, including the Forest Service, have acquired about one third of the private land in the Big Sur area, totaling about 20,000 acres. Conservation groups have turned the buyout of Big Sur into a business, making millions of dollars buying private land and selling it to government agencies. The Forest Service has acquired thousands of acres of private land outside the boundaries of the Los Padres National Forest. It appears that at least some of these Forest Service acquisitions were unlawful. To read more about this problem, with proposed solutions, [click here](#). To go straight to a page with all proposed solutions, [click here](#).

## Other Problems With The Bill

**Forest Service competition with local businesses** Although the Forest Service is provided millions of dollars to acquire land, it is apparently not provided sufficient money to maintain land once acquired. To obtain money for maintenance, the Forest Service proposed commercializing some national forest land in ways that would have amounted to unfair competition with local businesses. The bill fails to address this problem to avoid unfair competition by the Forest Service in the future, and existing language would apparently make the problem worse. To read more about this problem, with proposed solutions, [click here](#). To go straight to a page with all proposed solutions, [click here](#).

**Shortage of workforce housing** Many who work in Big Sur must drive long distances to get there, including from the Salinas Valley, Marina and other areas. The ongoing buyout of Big Sur has resulted in government ownership of over 75 percent of the land in the area (up from about 50 percent in the 1980s), contributing to high land costs, which contributes in turn to a shortage of affordable workforce housing. The bill fails to address this problem, and its provisions encouraging continued buyout of Big Sur would seemingly make the problem worse. To read more about this problem, with proposed solutions, [click here](#). To go straight to a page with all proposed solutions, [click here](#).