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January 22, 2002

Jeanine Derby
Forest Supervisor
6755 Hollister Avenue, Suite 150
Goleta, CA 93117

Dear Ms. Derby:

I am writing to request that a 60-day extension be granted for the comment period on the supplemental environmental impact statement to open new areas of the Los Padres National Forest to oil and gas exploration. Currently, the comment period will close on February 15, 2002. I believe there are several compelling reasons to extend this deadline.

The Los Padres National Forest is an enormous resource in southern California. Within its boundaries live several threatened or endangered species and it is the home of California condors. A large portion of the National Forest is wild and roadless. It is also well known for its variety of recreational resources, with millions of Californians living near the Los Padres.

Many of those requesting an extension are concerned that the comment period for the revision of four Forest Service plans in southern California closes on the same date. By granting this extension, people who plan to comment on both issues will have sufficient time to consider both. There is also concern that, though the original environmental impact statement for oil and gas leasing in Los Padres was released years ago, that this supplemental environmental impact statement was released at the end of the year, during the holiday season, leaving little time for appropriate consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to extend the comment period for the Los Padres oil and gas exploration supplemental environmental impact statement. You may reply to me through Leannah Bradley, my Southern California Director, at my Los Angeles Regional Office.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

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