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0029

April 17, 2002

Jeanine Derby, Supervisor
Los Padres National Forest
6755 Hollister Ave., Suite 150
Goleta, CA 93227

Re: Oil and Gas Leasing- Support for Alternative No. 1

Dear Ms. Derby:

I wish to convey my personal support for maximum protection of the environmental, recreational, and social values of the Los Padres National Forest by indicating my support for adoption of Leasing Alternative No. 1- no new leasing. The Los Padres National Forest provides its maximum value to the people of this county and country by being left in its most undisturbed condition. The monetary value of oil and gas leasing does not begin to compare with the value of an untrammled National Forest close to the homes of the 750,000 residents of Ventura County and the millions who live within visiting distance of the Forest. The value to native plant, animal, and fish species also outweighs the revenues to be gained temporarily from leasing. Ventura, Santa Barbara, and surrounding counties already provide a sufficient share of our nation's oil and gas resources without further disturbing the public lands of the National Forest.

Cordially,

Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District