

| [Kevin Cann comments:](#)

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kevin Cann. I am a Mariposa County, CA Supervisor recently elected to my second four-year term. I speak today in support of HR 3640 the Yosemite Lands Bill. I have submitted significant background and support statements for the record but wanted to highlight a few additional important facts.

The intent of Congressman Denham's bill is to simply authorize the Secretary of Interior to acquire up to 18 acres in Mariposa, California, to create a more efficient, accessible, and safer Yosemite National Park. The legislation will undoubtedly improve park traffic and visitor access and safety, and allow visitors to purchase entrance passes and receive orientation benefits before they enter the park. Additionally, administrative offices in Mariposa will greatly enhance recruitment, retention, housing and performance for over 100 employees. Importantly, non essential administrative facilities in the park would be available for more appropriate use or removal.

Mariposa County and Yosemite National Park have a long, mutually beneficial relationship. Over 70% of Yosemite's visitors do not overnight in the park. Most stay in one of the gateway communities located proximate to each of the park's four main entrances. The Mariposa entrance, called the "All Weather Highway" is kept open at all costs during inclement weather which regularly closes the other three entrances. While the population of the town of Mariposa is only 2000, in a very rural county of 18,500, over one million visitors a year enter the park directly through town. A 2000 Sierra Business Council study estimates that as many as 88% of the paychecks generated in Mariposa County come 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> hand from the tourists visiting Yosemite. Expanded services in Mariposa will take tremendous pressure off the National Park Service to build more and more infrastructure to better access Yosemite as well as additional employee residences and workspace in crowded Yosemite Valley.

Since 1980, National Park Service plans have called for moving facilities out of the spectacular Yosemite Valley and into the gateways to better serve the public. Mariposa County, the Yosemite Conservancy and Yosemite National Park have been planning and working toward establishing joint administrative and visitor service facilities outside the park for a decade. In 2004, President George Bush signed legislation (H.R. 620) specifically authorizing park facilities to be located outside of Yosemite National Park "for visitor and administrative services." HR 3640 authorizes the required land acquisition.

With advances in technology, visitors who normally arrive in the gateway town the afternoon before their Yosemite visit, will be able to get a full Park Ranger orientation, entrance passes, maps and plan their trip BEFORE they enter the

park. This process should practically eliminate entrance station backups which now reach two hours on busy weekends and severely limit access to this Crown Jewell National Park.

In conclusion, many partners both public and private, stand ready to provide facilities, the costs of which traditionally fall 100% on the National Park Service. HR 3640 specifically promotes public/private partnerships which will have dramatic, measurable positive impacts on park visitors and employees, as well as the economy of Mariposa County.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the Yosemite Lands Act.