

To: Assemblyman William W. Monning, 27<sup>th</sup> District.  
P.O. Box 942849 Sacramento CA. 94249

April 2, 2010

From: Michael H. Boone  
[REDACTED]

Dear Assembly Member Monning,

I am writing to you today as a private citizen to **express support for the introduction of AB 2074** to designate 920 acres as State Wilderness within Andrew Molera State Park.

As I understand the issues, there have been some concerns expressed in the local community that a Wilderness designation in this area may compromise the safety of the Big Sur community in the event of a Wildfire within or near the State Park. After reading the majority of the proposal, reviewing maps and studying the aerial photos of the area I thought my observations and opinions might be of value. My background and experience in the Big Sur area, as both a resident and as a Wildland Fire Suppression Professional are extensive. Before my retirement in January 2009, I worked as an Engine Captain and Battalion Chief on the Monterey Ranger District for over nineteen years. I have a total of thirty one seasons of public service working with the U.S. Forest Service as a wildland firefighter. I have also worked in a supervisory role and as part of Incident Management Teams that have been assigned to fire operations in and near the area of this discussion.

In the past, the Molera Ridge Line and the abandoned jeep trail above the Old Coast road and trending southwest towards Mount Manual, Post Summit and the Big Sur River Gorge have provided firefighter access and fire suppression opportunities on several incidents. This ridgeline and the topographic features along the proposed State Wilderness boundary have historically been used for both direct attack suppression efforts and in contingency planning during fires both large and small. The **"setbacks" included in the proposal** and the directions authorizing use and approval of mechanized equipment **clearly recognize and account for this potential emergency use in the future.** It is my opinion that **the proposal does not change nor compromise** the ability of firefighters to take aggressive actions on Wildland Fires or to protect the Big Sur community and its urban improvements. Nor does the proposal in my view change the ability to conduct hazardous fuels treatments or prescribed burning in the most logical locations within the area should funding become available or be desirable in the future.

The recent large fires, along with the fire prone nature of the Big Sur Coastline makes the concerns of fire protection and public safety an understandable priority for this community along with many others in Monterey County. Additionally, designation of new Wilderness Areas and the best use of public lands is also an area of legitimate debate and worthy of public input. But in the case of the proposed Andrew Molera Wilderness these issues are, in my opinion, very separate and unrelated.

/s/ *Michael Boone*  
Coleville, California

