

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 23, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As proud cosponsors of legislation (S. 1559) to create a National Conservation Area for land parcels in the San Juan Islands that are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), we write to express our support for your efforts to conserve these same lands through a National Monument designation – an authority that Congress has granted as part of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

BLM currently manages about 1,000 acres in the San Juan Islands that provide important wildlife habitat and are critical to the natural beauty, which draws thousands of visitors each year. We appreciate the interest and efforts of Secretary Salazar, who visited the area earlier this year, to discuss the options for protecting these cherished lands. We are especially appreciative of his willingness to listen to our local constituents and their concerns about our legislation and the National Monument designation.

While we continue to push for the swift passage of our legislation to conserve these areas, there may not be enough time to move it through the legislative process this year. We believe that a National Monument designation would offer another pathway to conserving these lands and could expedite the process. As long as this designation provides the same framework and opportunities for public input as our legislation, there is strong support in our state for such a dual-track approach. It has been endorsed by stakeholders within local and state government, including the San Juan County Council, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners, Washington state Governor Christine Gregoire, and U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen. We believe this dual-track approach offers the best chance to conserve these lands in the San Juan Islands this year and hope you agree.

Thank you for your interest in conserving the precious lands in the San Juan Islands. We look forward to working with you to preserve them for future generations.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator

CC: Secretary Ken Salazar, Department of the Interior