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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

ARMED SERVICES

June 11, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

As you know, I have sponsored legislation (H.R. 2912) to create a National Conservation Area within Bureau of Land Management parcels in the San Juan Islands in my district. BLM manages approximately 1,000 acres in these islands which are important wildlife habitat and are critical for the natural beauty that brings thousands of tourists to the islands every year. I appreciate your recent visit to this area to talk with my constituents about ways to protect these areas and your willingness to listen to local stakeholders' input on my legislation.

While I continue to push for the timely passage of legislation to protect these areas, partisan opposition to the movement of any public lands legislation may slow the legislative process. As such, I ask that you recommend to the President that he use his authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate these areas as a National Monument. I understand that there are opportunities for such a designation that would meet many of the objectives of my legislation, such as improved public input into how these areas are managed.

This "dual track" approach has been endorsed by stakeholders within local and state government, including the San Juan County Council, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners, and Governor Gregoire. I believe such an approach will best serve the conservation needs of these important areas and encourage you to join me in supporting such an approach.

Thank you for your continued interest in the San Juan Islands. I look forward to continuing to work with you on preserving these areas.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
US Congressman
Washington, 2nd District