



May 9, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20240

RE: BLM Lands in the San Juan Islands

Dear Secretary Salazar:

Thank you for your support of our community's position on permanent protection of BLM lands in the San Juan Islands. The proposed San Juan Islands National Conservation Area is very much in line with our philosophy at the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau – balancing tourism and stewardship in the Islands. In San Juan County our tourism-based economy depends on our pristine environment. We support permanent protection in order to preserve scenic views, flora and fauna, history, culture, and recreation areas. Permanent protection of these 1,000 acres will preserve unspoiled jewels for future generations of residents and visitors.

The San Juan Islands are fortunate to be home to some of the world's most highly esteemed marine scientists and an unusually large and energetic community of environmental educators, interpreters and volunteer stewards. The community voice here is strong, educated and experienced. We believe that local input into management of these lands, particularly in the area of visitor education, is in the best interest of all. We stand ready for the responsibility of this commitment.

We join with Governor Gregoire and the San Juan County Council in support of a Conservation Lands designation to be achieved either by legislation introduced by Representative Larsen and Senator Cantwell, or by a second route under the Antiquities Act. We applaud your offer to propose to President Obama that these lands be permanently protected through presidential proclamation rather than risk an uncertain and lengthy legislative process.

The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau represents over 350 local businesses and partners with the three local Chambers of Commerce. We look forward to working with you, Senator Cantwell and Representative Larsen in the pursuit of either path toward permanent protection. However the goal is attained, we all want to achieve a Conservation Lands designation that provides permanent protection for the BLM lands of the San Juan Islands.

Sincerely,

Carl Silvernail, President
On behalf of the Board of Directors, San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau

Cc: Senator Maria Cantwell
Representative Rick Larsen
San Juan County Council
Islanders for the San Juan Islands National Conservation Area