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Mary Hurrell, (202) 225-5187, mary.hurrell@mail.house.gov

Rep. Huffman, Senator Schiff, Bay Area Members Introduce Bill to Designate National Scenic Trail

Legislation would connect Bay Area parks, expand access, and boost recreation economy

San Rafael, CA – Today, U.S. Representative Jared Huffman (CA-02) and U.S. Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA), along with every member of the Bay Area delegation, introduced legislation to help designate the 550+ mile Bay Area Ridge Trail as a National Scenic Trail. This designation would enhance the trail's visibility as a world-class recreation opportunity and attract new visitors, in addition to helping connect the different routes within the trail.



Hikers climb steps on Bay Area Ridge Trail in front of Golden Gate Bridge. Photo courtesy of Christine La

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a crown jewel of our region, providing millions of people with access to some of the most stunning natural landscapes in the country and connecting our communities to the outdoors,” **said Rep. Huffman**. “Designating it as a National Scenic Trail would not only help complete it – it would set it on par with iconic trails like the Appalachian and Pacific Crest and elevate the incredible and diverse Bay Area landscapes. This would be a major boost for the recreation economy, and our bill gets that ball rolling.”

The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a scenic multi-use trail stretching 550 miles along the natural features that surround the San Francisco Bay. With over 415 miles already complete, the trail connects more than 75 parks and open spaces and provides recreational opportunities for hikers, cyclists, tourists, and more across nine Bay Area counties. This bill directs the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility study on making this designation, which is currently held by only 11 trails across the country.

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail gives visitors to the Bay Area and its residents the opportunity to enjoy more than 500 miles of some of California's most incredible outdoor beauty, including parks and preserves. Providing federal recognition to this ridgeline trail will help preserve it for future generations, and I'm proud to partner with Congressman Huffman and our Bay Area delegation in the effort to make it so,” **said Senator Schiff**.

“This legislation kicks off a quest to add the Bay Area Ridge Trail to an elite group of National Scenic Trails, like the Appalachian Trail or Pacific Crest Trail. The Ridge Trail traces the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay, offering hikers, equestrians, and cyclists access to stunning views and diverse scenic, historic and cultural landscapes, for both close-to-home jaunts and epic adventures,” **said Janet McBride, Executive Director, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council**. “NST status would raise awareness and expedite completion of this world-class trail, which boasts over 400 completed miles, on the path to a 550-mile fully connected loop. We applaud Congressman Huffman for spearheading this legislation, and the entire Bay Area delegation for signing on as co-authors. We invite everyone to join us on this journey!”



Cyclist traverses Marin Headlands on Bay Area Ridge Trail. Photo courtesy of Maureen Gaffney.

The legislation requires the National Park Service to complete the feasibility study within one year, in consultation with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and relevant federal and state agencies. The trail meets all the required criteria established in the National Trails System Act of 1968 for National Scenic Trail designation, including:

- Extended trail route of more than 100 miles
- Provides maximum outdoor recreation potential
- Provides for enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, and cultural qualities
- Represents desert, marsh, grassland, mountain, canyon, river, and forest
- Represents landforms that exhibit significant regional geographic characteristics
- Connects with side trails, which provide additional public access

Full text of this legislation can be found [here](#).

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail lines a remarkable stretch of over 500 miles of stunning scenery around Northern California, giving millions of Californians access to nature and outdoor recreation opportunities,” **said Senator Padilla**. “Jumpstarting the effort to designate this multi-use recreation destination as a National Scenic Trail would bring in new visitors to bolster our tourism economy and safeguard some of the region’s world-class parks and landscapes for generations to come.”

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail is an iconic landmark that connects communities to nature, to open space and to one another,” **said Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi**. “The Bay Area Ridge Trail Act will help us understand how to best preserve accessibility for exploration of the beautiful landscape that defines and surrounds our region. By studying the Ridge Trail’s future, we take an important step toward recognizing its national significance and ensuring that it can be enjoyed for generations to come.”

“Our National Scenic Trails provide wonderful opportunities for recreation, connection, and admiring our beautiful public lands,” **said Congressman DeSaulnier**. “I am proud to join this to bring this worldclass recreational experience to our community and promote access to and conversation of public lands across the country.”

“The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most beautiful recreational treasures in America, and our regional trails are beloved by local residents of all ages and welcome visitors from around the world. Congress has a unique power to help protect and expand access to precious outdoor spaces, and I wholeheartedly support elevating the Bay Area Ridge Trail to become a National Scenic Trail. As a lifelong Bay Area resident now raising my kids here, I want to do everything we can to help ensure they and future generations will continue to cherish our regional trails. I’m proud to cosponsor the Bay Area Ridge Trail Act, and thank my colleague Congressman Huffman for his steadfast leadership as Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee,” **said Congressman Mullin**.

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail provides over 400 miles of public trails and counting, opening our beautiful outdoors to walkers, hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders. The beauty and ecological diversity of the San Francisco Bay ridge is unparalleled anywhere else in our country and I am proud to join my colleagues in supporting this critical first step toward designating the Bay Area Ridge Trail as a National Scenic Trail,” **said Congressman Thompson**.

“California’s natural beauty is truly one of the wonders of the world,” **said Congressman Eric Swalwell**. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in supporting the Bay Area Ridge Trail Act to preserve this treasured landscape and designate it as a National Scenic Trail. One of our greatest assets as a state is our environment, and I intend to always protect it for future generations.”

“As a lifelong Californian, I am proud to join Ranking Member Huffman in introducing this critical legislation to protect the historic Bay Area Ridge Trail for generations to come,” **said Rep.**

Garamendi. “Across the East Bay, residents come together along the Trail to hike, bike, and experience California’s breathtaking natural beauty. I will always fight to protect and expand access to America’s extraordinary outdoor spaces.”

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail is such a beautiful path, and I’m particularly excited that they’re working on nearly 50 miles of new pathway through the 18th district,” **Rep. Lofgren said.** “Designating this as a National Scenic Trail will be a great boost to tourism for California, and I am excited by the prospect of more people experiencing the natural beauty of the Bay Area.”

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail’s beauty deserves national recognition. This first step toward national scenic trail status will help make our region’s national treasures available to more of our outdoor-loving community,” said **Rep. Sam Liccardo.**

“I am proud to support Congressman Huffman’s Bay Area Ridge Trail Act, and I’m grateful for his leadership on this issue,” **said Congresswoman Lateefah Simon.** “The Ridge Trail protects open space, connects communities, and provides current and future generations with access to northern California’s unrivaled natural beauty. This legislation is an important step in the Bay Area Ridge Trail finally getting the federal recognition it so richly deserves.”

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail is one of the Bay Area’s greatest outdoor treasures, connecting 75 parks and allowing millions of people to enjoy the beauty and bounty of the region,” **said Rep. Panetta.** “This bill takes an important step toward recognizing the national significance of the trail by directing a feasibility study for National Scenic Trail designation. By preserving the beauty of this remarkable trail, we can ensure future generations can enjoy the Bay Area’s stunning natural beauty.”

“We must make sure we protect the beauty of our public lands. I’m proud to work with Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) on his National Trails System Act that will authorize the study and extension of national scenic trails that help connect communities and preserve the Bay Area,” **said Rep. Ro Khanna.**

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Congressman Jared Huffman represents California’s 2nd Congressional District, which spans the North Coast of the state from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Oregon border, and includes Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte counties. He currently serves as Ranking Member of the Committee on Natural Resources and as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

He is the founder of the Congressional Freethought Caucus.