

The Pinnacles have long been a special place for Central Coast families to explore. The majestic volcanic spires and soaring condors create lasting memories for visitors coming to experience this California gem. We now have a real chance to elevate the Pinnacles into a National Park. By placing it on the same level as other great parks, like Yosemite or Death Valley, generations of tourists will want to visit this natural wonder.

With the support of environmental organizations, the Monterey and San Benito county governments and local business groups, I introduced H.R. 3641, the Pinnacles National Park Act. This bipartisan bill was passed unanimously by the House of Representatives and is moving towards a vote in the Senate. With the support of Senator Boxer, we expect it to pass the Senate and arrive on the President's desk for his anticipated signature – establishing the 59th National Park right in our backyard.

Created in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt, Pinnacles National Monument is the 11th oldest National Monument in the United States. This current status as a monument is what helped the Pinnacles receive such wide bipartisan support. Since the land is already entrusted to the National Park Service, this legislation has minimal costs associated with the status change...but the benefits for our local economy are huge!

National Park status will encourage Americans to travel to the Central Coast to see this unique treasure. Hotels, shops and wineries will benefit from this increase in tourism, injecting revenue into the local economy. The creation of Pinnacles National Park means more jobs in Monterey and San Benito counties.

More than just a tourist destination, the Pinnacles is special area that deserves protection. It is one of the rare places where you can see the forces of tectonic plate movement at work, something that is not found anywhere else in the National Park catalog. Additionally, the Pinnacles is the home to 149 species of birds, 49 mammals, 22 reptiles, six amphibians, 68 butterflies, 36 dragonflies and damselflies, nearly 400 bees and many thousands of other invertebrates.

The monument is also home to 30 endangered California condors. Since 2003, the Park Service has been a big part of the California Condor Recovery Program to re-establish California condors at the Pinnacles.

I will continue to work on this important piece of legislation and will not rest until we can welcome the world to our next great National Park.