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# CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK

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October 3, 2023

To Whom It May Concern

I am the executive director of the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN). Our organization supports grassroots leadership to promote environmental health, education, community organizing, collaborative dialogue, and political involvement among rural, underserved communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley. We have an extensive history of developing successful and innovative initiatives to change the valley's history of environmental injustice and pollution.

In 2020, we launched the GOAL program, partnering with Unite the Parks, to introduce disadvantaged youth from the Central Valley to the beauty and nature in nearby National Parks. Our youth suffer from high rates of poverty and the worst air pollution in the nation, with little access to parks and fresh air. On our many journeys to Yosemite, we've experienced the awe-inspiring power of waterfalls, grandeur and granite monoliths, but also the overwhelming crowding and the long lines to get into these parks.

We need more public spaces and places for our youth and families to experience unfettered nature, clean air, pure water, and healthy exercise. A new national monument between Yosemite and Sequoia – is needed to alleviate crowding and to restore a landscape for all to enjoy. In addition, trees are champions in the fight against climate change, and restoring these forests will help us breathe easier, purify our water, and support abundant wildlife.

Our board endorsed the Range of Light National Monument on June 17, 2019, because it is an idea that ensures our federal land is serving the people who most need it: our youth and our families and all the species which deserve protection.

Sincerely,

Nayamin Martinez  
CCEJN Executive Director  
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