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ACR-217 Point Reyes National Seashore: dairy and beef ranching. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 217

CHAPTER 174

Relative to the Point Reyes National Seashore.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 30, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 217, Levine. Point Reyes National Seashore: dairy and beef ranching.

This measure would recognize the dairy and beef ranching families of the Point Reyes National Seashore for their environmental stewardship and contributions to the economic success of the region's agricultural sector and would declare the Legislature's support for the ranching families of the Point Reyes peninsula and the National Park Service in their efforts to ensure the continuation of historic beef ranches and dairy farms and the preservation of the cultural and natural resources at the seashore.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Cattle ranching has been a mainstay of the Point Reyes peninsula since the establishment of Spanish missions in the early 19th century and is an essential part of the historical fabric of the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, Many of the families that ranched the Point Reyes peninsula a century ago continue to honor their families' legacies by productively and responsibly working the land; and

WHEREAS, In establishing the Point Reyes National Seashore under the supervision of the National Park Service in 1962, the United States Congress recognized the value to the government and the public of the continuation of ranching activities, as presently practiced, in preserving the beauty of the Point Reyes peninsula; and

WHEREAS, The Point Reyes National Seashore enabling legislation was amended in 1978 to explicitly provide that the owners of agricultural property at the time of its acquisition by the United States may retain rights of use and occupancy for a finite term and upon expiration of a term, may, at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, be offered the opportunity to continue to use the land for historic agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, To date, the Secretary of the Interior has continued to exercise the discretion to offer that opportunity; and

WHEREAS, Former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar reaffirmed the importance of continued ranching on the Point Reyes National Seashore in 2012 when he stated that the United States Department of the Interior and the National Park Service support the continued presence of dairy and beef ranching operations in Point Reyes' pastoral zone and recognized that ranching has a long and important history on the Point Reyes peninsula; and

WHEREAS, On November 29, 2012, former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar issued a memorandum authorizing the National Park Service to pursue long-term maximum 20-year leases or permits for dairy and beef ranching operations, demonstrating the support of the National Park Service and the United States Department of the Interior for the continued presence of dairy and beef ranching; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the California Coastal Act of 1976, the County of Marin's local coastal program encourages continued ranching and dairying operations within the pastoral zone of the Point Reyes National Seashore; and

WHEREAS, Agriculture on the Point Reyes peninsula accounts for approximately 20 percent of the \$100 million gross agricultural production of the County of Marin, is a linchpin of west Marin agriculture, and is thus critical to the economic success not only of the County of Marin but of the state as well; and

WHEREAS, Dairy farmers and cattle ranchers at the Point Reyes National Seashore are making great efforts to increase highly sustainable and organic agricultural activities, which makes them a crucial contributor to the regional foodshed and an internationally esteemed model for organic and sustainable agriculture, and allows them to cater to the preferences of bay area consumers; those efforts have earned the near-unanimous support of local Marin County environmental groups; and

WHEREAS, Dairy farmers and cattle ranchers at the Point Reyes National Seashore understand the importance of protecting natural resources and apply environmental stewardship to ranching and farming operations with respect to land, water, and wildlife resources, maintaining sensitive habitat for at least six threatened and endangered plant species and at least two sensitive animal species through their grazing activities, decreasing their greenhouse gas emissions footprint, and ensuring water quality through compliance with the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Grazing Lands and Dairies in the Tomales Bay Watershed, among many other environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, Livestock practices and carbon sequestration both have scientific support showing these activities can help mitigate climate change; and

WHEREAS, A recent settlement agreement to litigation involving the National Park Service, seashore ranchers, the County of Marin, and three environmental organizations has resulted in a General Management Plan Amendment planning process that will consider the extended 20-year permits for continued historic ranching operations on the Point Reyes peninsula; and

WHEREAS, Rural communities need stabilization, and investing in infrastructure and long-term leases can create resilience for the Point Reyes National Seashore ranching and dairying community; and

WHEREAS, The National Park Service encourages ranchers of the Point Reyes National Seashore to provide affordable housing for individuals working on those ranches, which enables best agricultural management practices, retains a stable labor force, and makes farming a viable profession for the next generation; now, therefore; be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby recognizes the historic dairy and beef ranching families of the Point Reyes National Seashore as an important part of the cultural landscape and resource on the Point Reyes peninsula and for their environmental stewardship and contributions to the economic success of the region's agricultural sector; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature supports the ranching families of the Point Reyes peninsula and the National Park Service in their efforts to ensure the continuation of historic beef ranches and dairy farms and preservation of the cultural and natural resources at the Point Reyes National Seashore; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.