



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

March 29, 2012

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

Dear Secretary Salazar,

The Park Service's latest falsification of science at Point Reyes National Seashore is the straw that breaks the camel's back.

The Park Service presented charts of noise measurements in its draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) that appear to irrefutably establish that oyster boats at Drakes Bay disturb the pastoral quiet of the nearby wilderness. Here is the problem: the noise did not come from oyster boats, nor did it come from anywhere near Drakes Estero or Point Reyes National Seashore. Amazingly, the decibel recordings the Park Service attributed to Drakes Bay oyster boats came from jet skis in New Jersey 17 years ago.

I am frankly stunned that after all the controversy over past abuse of science on this issue, Park Service employees would feel emboldened to once again fabricate the science in building a case against the oyster farm. I can only attribute this conduct to an unwavering bias against the oyster farm and historic ranches.

My attention was drawn to the Seashore when I fought to extend local ranching leases from five years to 10 so there would be sufficient investment and time for the farmers and ranchers to not only operate viable businesses, but to perform environmental improvements. Despite efforts to comply, the ranches and oyster farm have been subject to repeated mistreatment that is unbecoming of your Department.

The Park Service has falsified and misrepresented data, hidden science and even promoted employees who knew about the falsehoods, all in an effort to advance

a predetermined outcome against the oyster farm. Using 17-year-old data from New Jersey jet skis as documentation of noise from oyster boat engines in the estuary is incomprehensible. It is my belief that the case against Drakes Bay Oyster Company is deceptive and potentially fraudulent.

The Park Service's conduct is a serious breach of trust with the farming and ranching community at Point Reyes National Seashore. The ranchers are concerned that if Drakes Bay Oyster Company's permit is not renewed, they will be next. I share that concern.

I firmly believe that renewal of the permit is the only way for the Park Service to send an unmistakable signal that the Administration's commitment to scientific integrity is real and that repeated misrepresentations of the scientific record to advance employees' personal agendas will not be tolerated. I also believe that renewal of the permit is the only way for the Park Service to begin to repair the trust of the Seashore's ranching and farming community.

I look to you to bring resolution to this very serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator