

January 21, 2009

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey
2263 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Note: This letter was submitted via Congresswoman Woolsey's online email form.

Dear Lynn:

Marin Conservation League wishes to commend you for your forthright statement of December 16, 2008, to the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concerning the subject issue. We have just seen your letter, which concerned the possible insertion of language into the Fiscal Year 2009 Interior Appropriations bill that would extend the Drakes Estero Oyster Farm lease beyond 2012.

We were unaware of the proposal to attach a rider to the appropriations bill until recently, and, therefore, respect your timely appeal. On the basis of yours and other objections, we understand that Senator Feinstein has withdrawn the rider, but that the issue will remain active and for the time being unresolved.

Marin Conservation League, founded in 1934, is one of the oldest and most effective guardians of Marin's environment. We played a major role in the acquisition and transfer into public parkland of Pt. Reyes National Seashore (as well as GGNRA and numerous State parks and Marin open space lands), so we take an active interest in the ongoing management of these public lands. We are on record as supporting the reversion of Drakes Estero to wilderness status in 2012, as was intended by law. We are also aware of the NAS scientific review currently underway, and are waiting for the results of that study before deciding whether to revisit any part of our position. In the meantime, MCL will continue to support removing barriers to the Estero's becoming a designated Wilderness Area in 2012. We are particularly concerned about the potential for undermining the Wilderness Act if the Oyster operation were permitted to continue under an extension.

We would be glad to discuss this with you further if and when a deliberative public process on the future disposition of the Oyster Farm begins. In the meantime, please keep MCL informed.

Sincerely yours,

Nona Dennis,

President