



## **Supporters of the Proposed Chuckwalla National Monument**

Below are quotes from Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz, M.D. as well as quotes from leaders thanking the Senator and Representative for their leadership and support of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument

### **Senator Alex Padilla**

"Establishing the Chuckwalla National Monument across California's vast desert landscape would help us fight the climate crisis, protect critical wildlife corridors, preserve sacred tribal sites, and improve equitable access to nature for our local communities. Our proposal reflects the input of tribal leaders who have fought for years to protect these sacred landscapes, and from our partners in the energy industry who worked with us to carefully craft the Monument's boundaries to ensure we can meet our shared clean energy goals. I look forward to working alongside federal officials, tribes, veterans, and local businesses to secure these protections as soon as possible."

### **Congressman Raul Ruiz, M.D.**

"I am honored to introduce the Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2024, alongside California U.S. Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler. I am particularly proud of the collaboration and leadership from a robust coalition, including local tribal leaders, conservationist groups, members of the renewable energy industry, utility companies, community organizations, and youth leaders. They have built the necessary momentum and agreements to ensure this project's success. The Chuckwalla National Monument is good for the environment, the economy, and the public's health. It aims to protect pristine wildlife habitats, endangered plants and animals, and sacred sites of significant spiritual importance to local tribes, crucial for their cultural preservation. Additionally, it will enhance tourism and economic opportunities in our region and provide a new venue for constituents to hike, bike, and enjoy the breathtaking landscapes and natural beauty of our desert. This monument will play an important role in addressing California's and our nation's climate change goals while promoting the growth of renewable energy. I am thrilled that we have reached this milestone together and call on President Biden to use the Antiquities Act to expedite the creation of the monument."

**California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot**

“This bill protects a remarkable natural area in our state with important cultural sites and sensitive ecosystems. Designating this area as a National Monument will protect these important lands while boosting outdoor access for communities across the region. I’m proud to support tribal leaders and community-based organizations who are driving this effort, and thank Senator Padilla and Congressman Ruiz for championing this important proposal.”

**Chairman Thomas Tortez Jr. of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians**

“For thousands of years, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians have called the lands in the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument home. The area contains thousands of cultural places and objects of vital importance to the history and identity of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. We strongly support the designation of the Chuckwalla National Monument and thank Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Raul Ruiz for championing this effort.”

**Jordan D. Joaquin, President of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe**

“These lands encompass our origins, history, songs, religious ceremonies, ancient sites, trails, petroglyphs, artifacts, and intaglios that are spread throughout our traditional territories. Our footsteps are etched into the landscape since the beginning of time and we continue to persist in modern times, still providing stewardship over these lands. We are wholeheartedly in support of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument.”

**Erica Schenk, Chairwoman of the Cahuilla Band of Indians**

“The Cahuilla Band of Indians is in strong support of the creation of the Chuckwalla National Monument. The area includes village sites, camps, quarries, food processing sites, power places, trails, glyphs, and story and song locations, all of which are evidence of the Cahuilla peoples’ and other tribes’ close and spiritual relationship to these desert lands.”

**Michael Madrigal (Cahuilla), Board President, Native American Land Conservancy**

“The Native American Land Conservancy supports the Chuckwalla National Monument campaign. We are excited to see many Tribal Nations engaged in the effort and leading the preservation and stewardship of this cultural landscape. It is heartening to see more Tribal communities involved in public land issues in recent years. Indigenous people must be heard and actively involved in all spaces that discuss the management of our homelands. We will continue to support Tribal communities and their many efforts to preserve cultural, natural, and spiritual values which are the foundations of our existence.”

**Dr. Frank Figueroa, Coachella City Council Member**

“Thank you, Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz, for your continued support of our Eastern Coachella Valley Communities and for protecting our public lands. By establishing the Chuckwalla National Monument, we can protect the cultural, recreational, and biodiversity

values of these lands. This monument can provide intentional recreation and outdoor access for many of these park-deprived communities and bring additional economic growth to the region.”

**Denise Delgado, Coachella City Council Member**

“Thank you, Senator Padilla, for being proactive in protecting these lands that hold much cultural, religious, and recreational significance for the communities of this region. These lands provide accessible outdoor recreation such as camping, hiking, and hunting opportunities for the Eastern Coachella Valley residents. In addition, the establishment of the Chuckwalla National Monument will enhance economic benefits for this entire region. By protecting these lands, we can protect the biodiversity and cultural resources for future generations.”

**Russell Betts, Desert Hot Springs City Council Member**

“As a local elected official, I often hear residents express strong support for protecting natural desert landscapes, in particular those in close proximity to our city. The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park expansion would protect prized public lands and enhance opportunities for equitable and sustainable enjoyment of these places for locals.”

**Gary Gardner, Desert Hot Springs City Council Member**

“The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park will provide even more opportunities for people to access the outdoors, as well as protect our beautiful deserts. Outdoor recreation and access to our gorgeous desert lands are among the primary drivers of our tourism-based economy and are part of what makes living here so special.”

**Frank Ruiz, Director of Audubon California’s Desert and Salton Sea Programs**

“Thank you, Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz, for championing the effort to designate the new Chuckwalla National Monument. As our communities face the impacts of climate change, this is a critical step in protecting the special places that both people and birds need. Not only will the designation preserve vital habitat and safeguard the area's biodiversity, it will ensure that local residents have access to the great outdoors.”

**Iris Gutierrez, President of the High Desert Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**

“The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument would help address the gap that Latinos face in accessing nature. Studies have shown that people of color, low-income communities, and families with children are most likely to be deprived of the wellness benefits that nature provides. Our thanks to Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for championing the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and helping ensure that our communities have access to nature.”

**Cyndi Lemke, Executive Director, San Jacinto-Hemet Chamber of Commerce**

“The San Jacinto-Hemet Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically supports the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. The designation would help ensure access to nature for local

residents and would add to a diversified economy that increases opportunities for tourism, jobs, and investments in our communities. We applaud US Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Raul Ruiz, M.D. for urging the Biden Administration to protect these lands for generations to come."

**Sendy Hernández Orellana Barrows, Conservation Program Manager, The Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM)**

"The Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM) is honored to join local community members, Indigenous leaders, and other conservation organizations in calling on President Biden to establish the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, which would be a crucial step in fulfilling his pledge to prioritize under-resourced communities and tackle climate change. These awe-inspiring landscapes within the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument are of great importance to all who consider the desert our backyard, as they provide a rich tapestry of natural wonders and cultural heritage and support a part of our well-being."

**Colin Barrows, CoFounder, CactusToCloud Institute**

"Today we are one step closer to completing a "ring" of protected public lands around the Coachella Valley, ensuring that everyone in our desert has the same access to outdoor recreation, and keeping landscapes intact for unique wildlife and climate resilience. With the Senate bill introduced by Senator Padilla and the earlier House bill introduced by Representative Dr. Ruiz, we are so close to establishing the Chuckwalla National Monument. President Biden should take the last remaining step and make the monument a reality using the Antiquities Act, protecting desert landscapes, plants, animals, and communities for generations to come."

**Pastor Adrian Chilpa, First God Church**

"I applaud Senator Padilla and Congressman Ruiz for their efforts to protect our public lands. The designation of the Chuckwalla National Monument will benefit our local communities and preserve numerous species threatened by climate change and continued drought. I join their efforts as a faith-based leader who advocates for responsible stewardship of God's creation and the preservation of natural resources for future generations."

**Lee Morcus, Co-Founder, Kaiser Restaurant Group, Palm Desert**

"Since my Father and I founded our restaurant group in the Coachella Valley over 32 years ago, Kaiser Grille has prided itself in providing menu items that are crafted from organic and sustainably raised sources because we recognize the importance of living and working in harmony with Mother Nature. We applaud our Valley's unified history and join public, private, and business efforts to preserve and protect important lands within and adjacent to the Coachella Valley. These protections and bills to establish Chuckwalla National Monument and expand Joshua Tree National Park not only provide additional attractions that will contribute to our local economies and communities, but they will also ensure that the proper balance of conservation, development, and recreation is maintained in our desert so that future generations will continue to visit and enjoy these lands."

**Mr. Lee Espinoza, Coachella Valley Boxing Club**

“Thank you, Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz, for supporting the Coachella Valley's youth. Throughout the years, I have instilled in many young athletes, many of whom became world champions, the love for their communities and the discipline of boxing. Our families in the Eastern Coachella Valley must have access to sports facilities and outdoor recreation to improve their physical and mental health. Establishing the Chuckwalla National Monument will provide our residents with easy and affordable outdoor recreation access while safeguarding our public lands for future generations.”

**Tammy Martin, Executive Director, Friends of the Desert Mountains**

“The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument's desert lands and the rich natural and cultural resources therein deserve protection. Friends of the Desert Mountains has been working for years to conserve pristine landscapes and preserve habitat connectivity in eastern Coachella Valley. Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Raul Ruiz, thank you for sharing and championing our vision of a thriving, productive, and inclusive community integrated with a healthy and sustainable natural environment.”

**Kelly Herbinson, Executive Director, Mojave Desert Land Trust**

“We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to act for the future stability of this unique desert region and the diverse people who live here. The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument is situated in one of the largest relatively intact ecosystems in the United States outside Alaska. But, this region is under threat from climate disruption and habitat loss. We thank Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for championing the need to protect the region's rich biodiversity, air quality, and cultural and historic sites.”

**Maureen McCarty, Board President of Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve**

“The Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve commend Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for their vision in advocating for the establishment of Chuckwalla National Monument and the expansion of Joshua Tree National Park. Through championing these initiatives, we will safeguard our national heritage and ensure future generations have the opportunity to access these magnificent landscapes.”

**Maite Arce, Hispanic Access Foundation**

“We applaud Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for their proactive stance and joining numerous current and former local elected officials, regional tribes, and cities including Banning, Palm Springs, and Desert Hot Springs, Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, residents, and environmental conservation groups to support the Chuckwalla National Monument designation. Residents in the eastern Coachella Valley and neighboring communities have endured severe environmental challenges, including extreme heat, air and water pollution, and limited access to natural spaces. Establishing the Chuckwalla National Monument will help rectify this disparity by ensuring fair access to nature and natural resources for these communities.”

**Janessa Goldbeck, CEO of Vet Voice Foundation and a Marine Corps veteran.**

“We applaud Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for championing the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. We see protecting these public lands as an extension of our service to this country and the duty of anyone who thinks of themselves as a patriot.”

**Jazzari Taylor, Policy Advocate - Advocate for Equity in the Outdoors, Latino Outdoors**

“Thank you, Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Raul Ruiz, M.D. for championing the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument in the California Desert. In the spirit of preservation, unity, and reverence for our shared heritage, Latino Outdoors proudly stands alongside Tribal leaders, community leaders, and veterans. By working together, we can ensure that all communities have equitable access to nature and ancestral lands.”

**Katie Hawkins, California Program Director, Outdoor Alliance**

“Access to outdoor recreation on public lands and waters is part of what makes California an incredible place to live, work, and play. Outdoor Alliance and its member organizations are thrilled to have Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz champion the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. The monument proposal would help ensure more equitable access to nature for eastern Coachella Valley communities and surrounding areas. The proposal would also advance California’s efforts to fight climate change and ensure that the state meets its goals to protect 30% of public lands and coastal waters by 2030.

**Linda Castro, Assistant Policy Director, CalWild**

“CalWild applauds Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for heeding the voices of the Tribes, marginalized local communities, and hosts of others calling for the enduring protection of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park expansion. As a California desert resident, I am personally grateful for their commitment to the conservation of public lands in our desert. We also commend Sen. Padilla for making this his third bill to include language permitting willing Tribes to develop agreements with agencies like the Bureau of Land Management to collaboratively manage the lands protected by his legislation.”

**Dr. Jun Bando, Executive Director, California Native Plant Society**

“The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument is home to irreplaceable and undisturbed desert habitats. These areas contain dozens of rare plant species, sensitive dry desert wash woodlands, and support myriad rare and common wildlife. Protection of this land will help conserve biodiversity in the face of climate change while advancing the goals of 30x30 and America the Beautiful. We are grateful to Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for championing the proposed National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park; this legislation is a significant step towards the permanent preservation of this beautiful and botanically rich landscape.”

**Moises Cisneros, Sierra Club**

“The Sierra Club stands proudly with Indigenous leaders, elected officials, local businesses, faith leaders, veterans, and community members calling for the designation of Chuckwalla National Monument and the Joshua Tree National Park expansion. The designation would be a boon for both residents and businesses—helping increase the quality of life for nearby communities while also adding recreational opportunities that make local cities more attractive for businesses and investment. With the introduction of Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz’s bills, we are now closer than ever to protecting this culturally and environmentally important part of the California desert. We hope President Biden continues to build on his commitment to protect our health and environment by fully protecting this one-of-a-kind landscape.”

**Luke Basulto, California Desert Program Manager - National Parks Conservation Association**

“The National Parks Conservation Association commends Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for standing with Indigenous leaders and passionate desert community members, in calling for the designation of Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park. People protect and fight for the things and places that they love. And for me, a lifelong California desert resident and new father, this critical protection hits differently. We call on President Biden to continue his administration’s commitment to the environment by designating these truly unique and irreplaceable landscapes.”

**Mike Young, Senior Political and Organizing Director, California Environmental Voters**

“The California desert is unique and invaluable to Indigenous Tribes and native plants and animals. We also know that protecting these lands can maximize the desert sector’s contribution to carbon emissions reduction. California Environmental Voters is proud to amplify the call for President Biden to advance our 30x30 goals by designating Chuckwalla National Monument and expanding Joshua Tree National Park. We’re grateful for Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz’s commitment to amplifying community voices throughout Southern California.”

**Laura Deehan, State Director, Environment California and Environment California Research & Policy Center**

“Senator Padilla is a real champion for nature and he demonstrated that again today with this announcement in support of the Chuckwalla Monument and Joshua Tree National Park expansion. In the face of biodiversity loss and climate change, California needs as much nature protected as possible for the sake of the state’s wildlife. Thanks to Sen. Padilla’s and Rep. Ruiz’s bills, we are now one step closer to protecting the home of the Chuckwalla lizard, the desert tortoise, and the Sonoran pronghorn. We urge President Biden and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to act quickly to protect the Sonoran Desert.”

**Maricela Rosales, California Associate Program Director, Conservation Lands Foundation**

“We applaud Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz’s foresight and leadership to designate a Chuckwalla National Monument and protect the public’s access to this California Desert region

and secure essential wildlife habitat and landscape connectivity at a key moment in time when we need to aggressively advance our nation's and California's goal of protecting 30% of public lands and coastal waters by 2030. Their legislation illustrates strong community support and, recognizing the unreliability of the Congressional process, we urge President Biden to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate this national monument quickly."

**Jack Thompson, California Desert Regional Director, The Wildlands Conservancy**

"As a long-time champion for the protection of America's public lands, The Wildlands Conservancy is a proud supporter of the establishment of Chuckwalla National Monument and the expansion of Joshua Tree National Park. Protecting the natural, scenic, and cultural values within these landscapes, as well as the public's access to them, could not be more important. We extend our sincerest thanks to Senator Padilla and Senator Ruiz for their support and vision in this effort."

**Ileene Anderson, California Deserts Director/Senior Scientist, The Center for Biological Diversity**

"The Chuckwalla National Monument area is a stunning landscape and home to numerous rare and endangered plants and animals. I'm so grateful to Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Dr. Raul Ruiz for their strong support of the monument proposal and their commitment to asking the Biden Administration to designate this irreplaceable area as a national monument."

**Paulette Brown-Hinds, Voice Media Ventures**

"We express our gratitude to Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for proposing legislation that will designate Chuckwalla as a national monument of interconnected cultural, natural, and spiritual significance, ensuring the protection of vast desert ecosystems and habitats. It will also safeguard important heritage values tied to the land, including multi-use trail systems, sacred sites, and traditional cultural places, along with the plants and wildlife they support. We urge the Biden Administration to support this designation, recognizing the imperative role these lands play in our region's environmental and cultural conservation efforts."

**Alicia Thomas, California Community Partnerships Manager, The Wilderness Society**

"The legislation proposed by Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz is a significant step forward in protecting California's deserts. A national monument would expand equitable access to nature for our desert communities, protect millennia of cultural heritage, and increase landscape connectivity to further protect the many endemic species within this unique transitional area in the SoCal deserts. Communities in Imperial and Riverside Counties have long-standing legacies honoring the relationship between people and landscape, and the Chuckwalla National Monument will ensure that present and future generations can continue to foster those connections. We applaud Senator Padilla and Representative Ruiz for standing with Tribal and community leaders in their call for action."