

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Mark-Up Memorandum

June 13, 2016

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff — Brent Blevins
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: H.R. 5244 (Rep. Steve Knight), To provide for the establishment of a national memorial and national monument to commemorate those killed by the collapse of the Saint Francis Dam on March 12, 1928, and for other purposes.
June 14 & 15, 2016; 1324 Longworth HOB

H.R. 5244 (Rep. Steve Knight), “*Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 5244, introduced by Congressman Steve Knight (R-CA), creates a national memorial at the site of the Saint Francis Dam collapse in 1928 to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture. Additionally, the bill creates a 440 acre national monument that will encompass the national memorial. This bill was introduced May 16, 2016.

Cosponsors

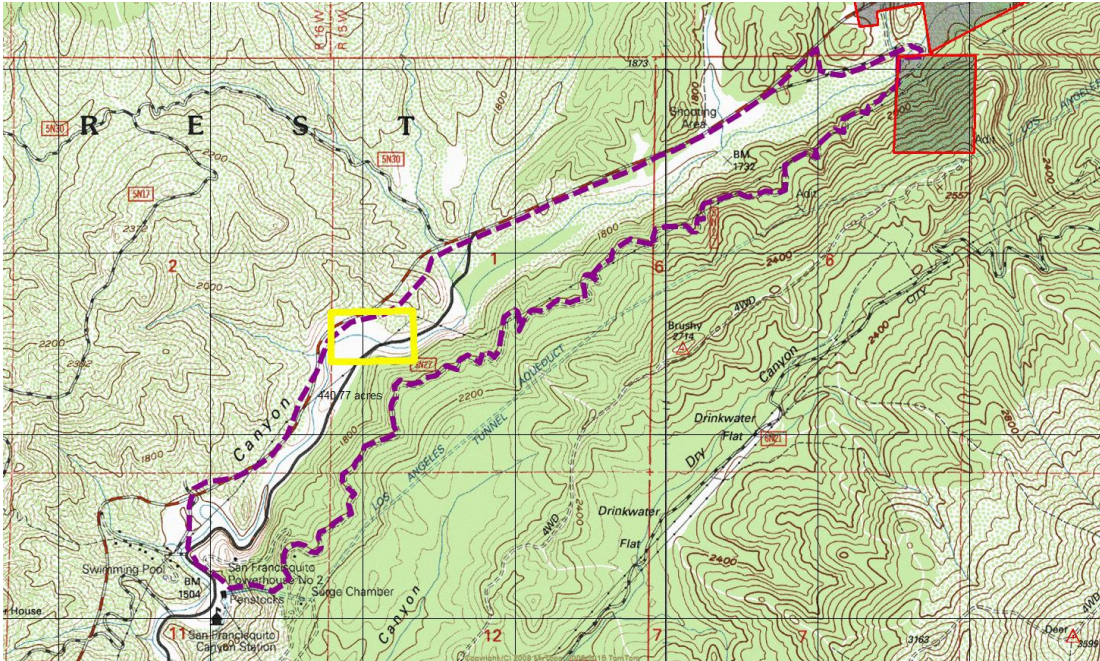
Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA)

Background

The Saint Francis Dam was one of several large infrastructure projects constructed in the early 20th century to help control the flow of water to southern California. On March 12, 1928, the dam breached, resulting in significant flooding that took more than 400 lives in Los Angeles County, California.¹ This failure is considered one of the worst civil engineering failures in the 20th century and resulted in the resignation of William Mulholland as head of the Los Angeles Bureau of Water Works and Water Supply.² Beyond the loss of life, thousands of residents lost their homes and experienced significant property damage due to the flood. Today, the site of the dam collapse and the affected areas are often subject to theft and vandalism.

¹ <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-stfrancis-dam-retrospective-20160319-story.html>

² <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/occasions-i-envy-dead-st-francis-dam-disaster-180954543/?no-ist>



The area in yellow is the site of the dam. The area outlined in purple is the proposed national monument.

Major Provisions/Analysis of H.R. 5244

H.R. 5244 recognizes the devastation of the flood and its impact on the residents of northern Los Angeles County by establishing a national memorial as well as a national monument to preserve the affected area for future generations. The bill authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the memorial via donation in consultation with the Santa Clarita City Council and the public. No taxpayer funds are authorized for the construction of the memorial.

The bill also authorizes the creation of a 440 acre monument (see map above) that will encompass the St. Francis Dam memorial. The boundaries of the memorial were designated in consultation with interest groups in the community. Motorized access will be allowed within the monument and grazing will continue to be allowed on any land where it is already permitted.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration testified at a Federal Lands Subcommittee hearing about H.R. 5244 on May 24, 2016.³ The Administration asked for changes to three provisions in the bill and asked to work with the Sponsor to address these issues.

³ http://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/testimony_ferebee.pdf

Anticipated Amendments

- An amendment is expected to be offered that eliminates the watershed assessment required in the bill as the request of the Forest Service. Increases by one year the length of time USDA has to submit to Congress recommendations for the establishment of the memorial. Provides an additional year for USDA to establish a management plan for the memorial. Also updates the reference to a new map.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

H.R. 5244 has no effect on current law.