

Susan Chandoha, Executive Director
Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
February 25, 2010

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands of the Committee on
Natural Resources legislative hearing on H.R. 4438: San Antonio Missions National
Historical Park Leasing and Boundary Expansion Act of 2010.

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the sub-committee.

My name is Susan Chandoha and I am the Executive Director of Los Compadres, the non-profit Friends' group to the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. Joining me today, are Sue Ann Garcia, Chairman of the Board of Los Compadres, and her husband, J.A., Betty Bueché, Facilities Division Manager of Bexar County, and Scott Bentley, Superintendent of our national historical park.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in support of HR 4438, introduced by Congressman Ciro Rodriguez and co-sponsored by Congressman Henry Cuellar, Congressman Charles Gonzalez and Congressman Lamar Smith. This legislation will do three things:

- 1) Complete an immediate boundary adjustment that brings in approximately 151 acres of lands owned by the park and lands actively being acquired by the park
- 2) Direct the National Park Service to conduct a study of lands within Bexar and Wilson Counties, Texas to identify lands that would be suitable for inclusion within this park's boundaries
- 3) Allow the Secretary of the Interior to lease its headquarters, maintenance, research and educational space from a non-profit or government agencies

Few can question the national and international significance of the San Antonio Missions. They comprise the single largest concentration of Spanish Colonial resources in the United States and include the only 18th century continuously-functioning dam, irrigation system and aqueduct on the continent. These missions represent the finest remaining monuments of Spain's frontier ingenuity in the country. The missions are living testimony to the pioneering spirit that established the Southwest and gave rise to our country's agricultural and ranching industries. As such, they have been placed on the United States tentative list for nomination as a World Heritage site.

By way of background, some 90 years ago the citizens of San Antonio began their work to acquire the protection of the National Park Service for its most valued historic resources. Our national park is based upon a unique set of cooperative agreements under which it operates in conjunction with local and state governments, the Catholic Archdiocese and the private sector. Very few national parks receive such total support from both the private and public sectors as does our missions' park.

When our missions became a national park, the boundary that was drawn by Congress was multifaceted due to the nature of the separate areas of each mission and related historic sites

coupled with the ownership of properties by public and private entities within the boundary. Some adjustments were made in 1990. The most important being the inclusion of the Rancho de las Cabras in Wilson County. This was the working ranch for Mission Espada and contains the only extant remains of a Spanish colonial ranch in the entire country.

Today the park consists of 10 diverse, significant cultural sites contained within 813 acres of historic farmland and archaeologically sensitive areas. These sites include Missions Concepción, San José, San Juan and Espada; the Espada Dam, Espada Aqueduct and Espada Acequia or irrigation ditch, the San Juan Acequia; and the Rancho de las Cabras. Mission Concepción and the Espada Aqueduct have “landmark” status. However, many additional Spanish colonial resources in both counties still remain outside the park boundary without adequate protection.

The boundary adjustment portion of this bill, if passed, will add 151 acres to the park. In actuality, 118 acres of this is owned by the park or will soon be donated or transferred to the park through a land exchange. The additional 33 acres proposed for addition could also possibly be donated, and if not, could cost as much as \$3.5 million. This will pay for invaluable historical resources, more efficient management and enhanced educational opportunities.

HR 4438 also calls for a new study to determine whether additional Spanish colonial resources in Bexar and Wilson Counties should be incorporated within the missions’ park boundary. Historically, the missions had strong ties with the San Antonio River as each mission had its own irrigation system that depended on the river for its water. Unfortunately, this historic connection was broken when flood control work on the southern, or mission reach, was done in the 1960s.

The citizens in Bexar County continued their efforts to bring the protection of the National Park Service to the missions. In 1975, the National Park Service completed a Feasibility Study on this. In this study, several different options for the park boundary were proposed and they were all based on the San Antonio River. However, none of the options were used because the National Park Service felt it would be too costly to restore the river’s connections to the missions.

Our citizens did get their dream partially fulfilled when Congress created a smaller, but somewhat discontinuous park in 1978. The citizens vowed to continue their local support to protect the missions and to develop them into America’s premier Spanish colonial national park. In so doing, they overwhelmingly voted in a local tax that raised \$271 million to fund the restoration of the mission reach of the San Antonio River. The historic connection between the river and the missions will be re-established when this work is completed in 2013.

Bexar and Wilson Counties have worked tirelessly to provide enhancements to our park over the years. The dream that started in 1924 and partially fulfilled in 1978 can now become a reality with the authorization of this study. We urge you to direct the National Park Service to 1) re-evaluate the addition of lands that meet the criteria for inclusion based on the 1975 feasibility study; and 2) evaluate the other known Spanish Colonial resources within these two counties that meet the criteria for inclusion.

We do not want to lose historic farmlands and ranch lands to urban development, but it is happening. Precious parts of our cultural heritage are slipping away. The bells of San José,

Concepción, San Juan and Espada rang long before the Liberty Bell and we cannot afford to lose any more of this history.

Los Compadres is comprised of individuals and businesses who are civic leaders who are passionate about our missions' national park. Los Compadres funded the first capital improvements project at the park in 1987 with the construction of a visitor contact station at Mission Concepción. Los Compadres funded the complete landscaping and tour bus drop-off at the federally-funded Visitor Center at Mission San José and we continue to fund landscaping throughout the park on an annual basis. Our non-profit funds 15 to 20 projects each year – critical educational and preservation projects that could not be done without our support.

Los Compadres has worked with the park and the City over the past two years to develop property near Mission San José. The City purchased lands adjacent to the mission and has started construction on a much-needed library at the site. The development plan also includes the construction of a new headquarters facility for the park that would contain an archival storage facility for the park's 990,000+ artifacts and a research facility. It would also contain space for educational programs and community forums.

Los Compadres would like to construct this facility and lease it to the park and HR4438 would allow the National Park Service to do this. Once the building was paid for, we would place the lease funds in an endowment in which 100% of the proceeds would be donated back to the park for preservation, restoration, development and educational projects. This is a win-win situation for all.

We would ask that the language in the bill give the National Park Service the authority to lease specifically from Los Compadres. If not modified, then the National Park Service would have to advertise the project with other non-profits who might be interested in building on the property. Or, at least insert the language that specifies a non-profit contribute, after debt payment, all rental proceeds from the lease be donated back to the missions' park.

Additionally, we would also like to see specific funding for several one-time highly specialized National Park Service needs in the amount of \$5.7 million for specialty equipment, security measures, archival storage and access control. Los Compadres' portion of the construction cost of the building would be \$6 million and we are ready to move forward.

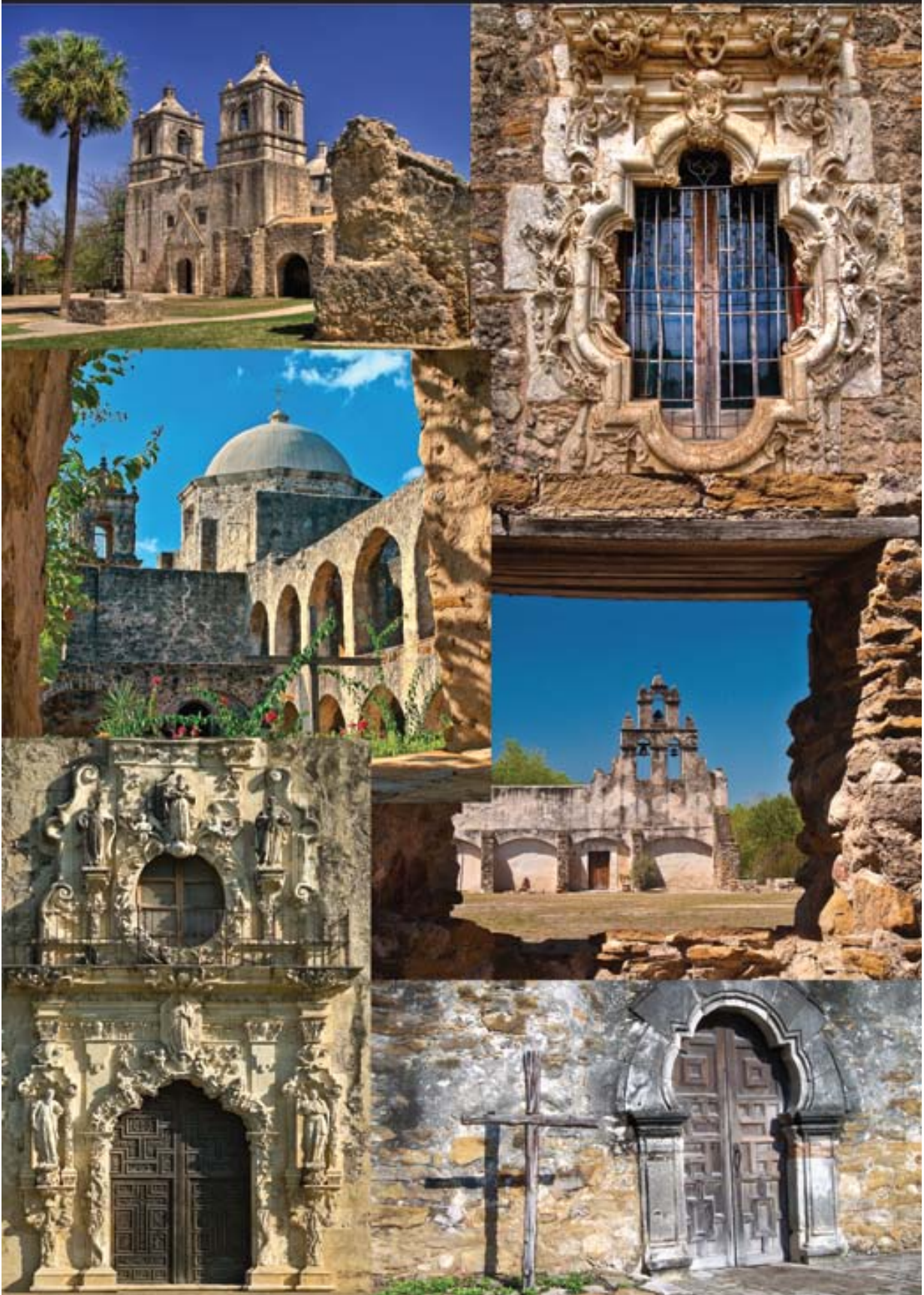
Mr. Chairman and members of the sub-committee, in our opinion Bexar and Wilson Counties have satisfied our early promises to Congress to support a national park. We are now asking the federal government to assist in meeting our joint commitment and needs for the future. We look forward to a continued successful relationship with you and the National Park Service.

From a business perspective, I see the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park as a significant economic generator for our city. Park visitation has increased over 761% since its creation and now has over 1.6 million annual visitors. And, as an American and Texan, I am committed to the preservation of our cultural heritage. I see these missions as more than architectural relics – they are the windows to our past and the foundation of our future.

Thank you for your consideration this morning.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Texas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior





CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

JULIÁN CASTRO

MAYOR

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and
Public Lands
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear ~~Chairman~~ Grijalva:

I am writing to ask for your support of HR 4438 on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. HR 4438 was filed by Congressman Ciro Rodriguez and is cosponsored by Congressmen Gonzalez, Smith and Cuellar from Texas. It has recently been introduced into the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

This bill does three things: it authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to lease space from a non-profit group or other government entity for a park headquarters; it expands the national park boundary; and it authorizes the National Park Service to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions.

On January 21, 2010, the San Antonio City Council adopted a resolution supporting the expansion of the San Antonio Missions, demonstrating our commitment to this national park. Passage of HR4438 is needed for the continued development of the San Antonio Missions and to the preservation of significant historical resources that are not within the boundary of the national park.

This national park contains the highest concentration of Spanish Colonial resources in the country and is a critically important historic and cultural resource for the San Antonio area and for our country. These historic structures are more than architectural relics – they are living monuments to the pioneering spirit that built this great nation. As such, all resources relating to this cultural heritage must be protected in perpetuity.

We appreciate your leadership and unwavering support for our National Parks and we look forward to working with you on this historic opportunity on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JLC", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julián Castro
MAYOR



February 19, 2010

The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva
Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
United States House of Representatives
133 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to ask you to support H.R. 4438. This bill will soon come to a vote in the House. It has recently been introduced into the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to lease space from a nonprofit group or other government entity for a park headquarters at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, to expand the boundary of the Park and to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions.

This is an important bill and your support of it is even more so. It will benefit the community at large by ensuring the Spanish colonial resources are protected in perpetuity.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Daniel M. Tejada
Mayor

The City of Floresville
1120 D Street • Floresville, Texas 78114
(830) 393-3105 • FAX (830) 393-2056 • (830) 216-7095
cityhall@floresville.net



NELSON W. WOLFF
COUNTY JUDGE

SERGIO "CHICO" RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 1

PAUL ELIZONDO
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 2

KEVIN A. WOLFF
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 3

TOMMY ADKISSON
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 4

BEXAR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

BEXAR COUNTY COURTHOUSE
100 DOLOROSA, STE. 1.20
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205-3038
(210) 335-2555 Telephone • (210) 335-2926 Fax • www.bexar.org

A RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING H.R. 4438 SPONSORED BY CONGRESSMAN CIRO RODRIGUEZ AND CO-SPONSORED BY CONGRESSMEN HENRY CUELLAR, CHARLIE GONZALEZ, AND LAMAR SMITH RELATING TO THE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK LOCATED IN BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS.

WHEREAS, the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was created in 1978 to preserve, protect, restore, and interpret the Spanish Missions of San Antonio along with their historically associated areas, features and values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park is located within a historically and culturally rich community in Bexar County, Texas; and includes: Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Mission San Juan, and Mission Espada; the entire San Juan Acequia and five miles of the Espada Acequia; and the Espada Dam and Acqeduct; and

WHEREAS, a 1975 Feasibility Study conducted by the National Park Service of the park, recommended a much larger area be established to best protect the cultural resources associated with the park; however, in order to enlarge the park to the maximum size, the local community was tasked with making significant, extensive and costly improvements to the San Antonio River due to the degradation effects of channelization; and

WHEREAS, the enabling legislation specifically calls for the management, protection, preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the park through a combination of land acquisition, easements, and agreements; and

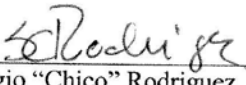
WHEREAS, Bexar County, in partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, is investing \$271 million into the San Antonio River Improvement project, to reconnect the San Antonio River with the Missions; and

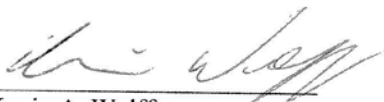
WHEREAS, Bexar County seeks to ensure that the investments made to restore the San Antonio River Eco-Systems are protected in perpetuity.

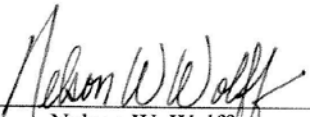
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commissioners Court of Bexar County:

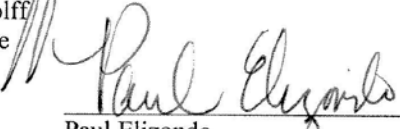
Bexar County supports H.R. 4438 sponsored by Congressman Ciro Rodriguez and Co-sponsored by Congressmen Henry Cuellar, Charlie Gonzalez, and Lamar Smith relating to the preservation, protection, restoration, and interpretation of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park located in Bexar County, Texas.

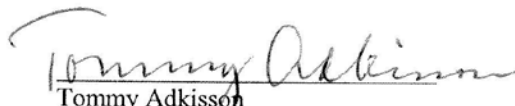
PASSED AND APPROVED WITNESS OUR SIGNATURES AND SEAL OF OFFICE, this _____ day of February, 2010.


Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez
Commissioner, Precinct 1


Kevin A. Wolff
Commissioner, Precinct 3


Nelson W. Wolff
County Judge


Paul Elizondo
Commissioner, Precinct 2


Tommy Adkisson
Commissioner, Precinct 4



The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva
Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Attn: Staff Director - David Watkins
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva,

I am Rev. David Garcia, Archdiocesan Director of the Old Spanish Missions, Inc., of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

I am writing to ask you to support HR 4438 on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. It has been recently introduced into the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands.

This bill will authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to lease space from a non-profit group or other government entity, for a park headquarters to expand the national park boundary, and to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions.

Passage of HR 4438 is critical to the continued development of the San Antonio Missions and to the preservation of significant historical resources that are not within the boundary of the national park. This national park contains the highest concentration of Spanish colonial resources in the country. These historic structures are more than architectural relics – they are living monuments to the pioneering spirit that built this great nation. As such, all resources relating to this cultural heritage must be protected in perpetuity.

We appreciate your leadership and unwavering support for our National Parks and we look forward to working with you on this historic opportunity on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park.

Sincerely,

Rev. David Garcia
Archdiocesan Director
Old Spanish Missions,



SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

February 11, 2010

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II, Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

I am the president of the San Antonio Conservation Society which is an organization dedicated to the preservation of historically significant properties within our community. Our organization has been involved in the preservation of historic properties in the area of San Antonio, Texas since 1924, and was instrumental in the preservation of Mission San José which is the crown jewel of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

Congressman Ciro Rodriguez has filed a bill on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park which is numbered HR4438, and it is cosponsored by Congressmen Cuellar, Gonzalez and Smith. This legislation would:

1. complete an immediate boundary adjustment that would bring approximately 151 acres of land owned by the national parks and land actively being acquired by the national park;
2. authorize the National Park Service to conduct a study of the lands within Bexar and Wilson Counties, Texas to identify lands that would be suitable for inclusion within the boundaries of the park; and
3. allow the national park to lease its headquarters, maintenance, research and educational space from non-profit or governmental agencies.

Our organization feels that the passage of this legislation is critical to the development of our national park and would be of great benefit to the preservation of some of the most significant historical sites in our community. We are asking that you support this important legislation and help our Congressional delegation with this legislation before the House Committee on Natural Resources.

We appreciate your past support of our National Parks and your work on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

Sincerely,

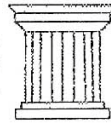
Rollette Schreckenghost
President

g:\Comp\11\Legis\4438

107 KING WILLIAM STREET ♦ SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204-1312 ♦ 210/224-6163 ♦ FAX: 210/224-6168



The Purpose of this Society is to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs, relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty, and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values.



RESOLUTION NO. R-1391

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY SUPPORTING HOUSE RESOLUTION 4438 WHICH AUTHORIZES THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT TO LEASE SPACE FROM A NON-PROFIT GROUP OR OTHER GOVERNMENT ENTITY FOR A PARK HEADQUARTERS, TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITIONS FOR THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK AND TO EXPAND THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY

WHEREAS, the San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP), Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project is a partnership comprised of Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the San Antonio River Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Antonio River Foundation, the San Antonio Water Systems and the San Antonio River Oversight Committee; and

WHEREAS, the San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP), Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project will restore two river remnants to the historic missions and enhance connectivity, visibility and visitation to the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project will re-establish the ecological context of the historic frontier missions and reconnect the San Antonio River to the Missions while also enhancing the relevance of other nearby Spanish Colonial resources; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service has been an integral partner with the San Antonio River Authority moving the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project forward by planning for the creation of a demonstration farm on the Park's property, integrating the Mission Reach Project's trail system into the National Park's trail system, coordinating ongoing educational and promotional support, and partnering with the San Antonio River Authority on the Get Outdoors! annual event; and

WHEREAS, the San Antonio River Authority is participating in a master planning effort aimed at supporting the goals of House Resolution 4438 with Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the National Park Service and Los Compadres; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RIVER AUTHORITY THAT:

The Board of Directors of the San Antonio River Authority support House Resolution 4438 which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to lease space from a non-profit group or other government entity for a park headquarters, to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions for the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park and to expand the San Antonio Missions National Park boundary.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 17th day of February, 2010.


Gaylon J. Oehlke, Chairman

ATTEST:


Roberto Rodriguez, Secretary

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY §
 §
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS §

I hereby certify the above and foregoing to be a duplicate original of Resolution No. R-1391 of the Board of Directors of the SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY as passed and approved by the members of said Board at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of said AUTHORITY held on February 17, 2010 in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, at which a quorum was present, as shown by the Minutes of said meeting.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness my hand and the official seal of the SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY on this the 17th day of February, A. D., 2010 in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.


Roberto Rodriguez, Secretary



SAN ANTONIO AREA TOURISM COUNCIL

Board of Directors

Chair

Henry Feldman

Martin Feldman Hospitality Management

Vice Chairs

Don McDaniel

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Davis Phillips

Phillips Entertainment

Secretary

Caryn Hasslocher

Fresh Horizons Catering

Treasurer

Milton Guess

Guess Enterprises

Steve Atkins

The Atkins Group

Louis Barrios*

Los Barrios Enterprises

Scott Bentley

San Antonio Missions

National Park Service

JoAnn Boone

Rio San Antonio Cruises

Martin Bozer*

Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Bill Brendel*

Crockett & Menger Hotels

Gino Caliendo

Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa

Cesar Cantor

Omni Hotel

Arthur Coulombe

JW Marriott Resort

Kyle Cole

Quarry Golf Club

Dan Decker*

SeaWorld San Antonio

Tom Duff

SanAntonioRiverwalk.com

Della Guidry

PRA San Antonio

Keith Harward

Embassy Suites Airport

Janet Holliday

The CE Group

Kent Krauss

San Antonio Business Journal

Mary Kunz

St. Philip's College

Scott Larsen*

Holiday Inn San Antonio Int'l. Airport

Bill Lyons

Casa Rio / Schilo's

Steve McCusker

San Antonio Zoo

Marise McDermott

Witte Museum

George Mery

Elegant Limousine & Charters

Marion Oettinger

San Antonio Museum of Art

Jim Quinn*

Marriott Rivercenter / Riverwalk

Chad Taylor

Hotel Valencia

Robert Thrailkill

Hilton Palacio del Rio

Virginia Van Cleave

San Antonio Conservation Society

Marty Wender

Martin & Hall

Brad Wuest

Natural Bridge Caverns

***Executive Committee**

Marco A. Barros

President & CEO

February 19, 2010

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

The Greater San Antonio Area Tourism Council is writing to ask you to support HR 4438 on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. It has recently been introduced into the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

This bill will authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to lease space from a non-profit group or other government entity for a park headquarters, to expand the national park boundary and to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions.

Passage of HR4438 is critical to the continued development of the San Antonio Missions and to the preservation of significant historical resources that are not within the boundary of the national park. This national park contains the highest concentration of Spanish Colonial resources in the country. These historic structures are more than architectural relics – they are living monuments to the pioneering spirit that built this great nation. As such, all resources relating to this cultural heritage must be protected in perpetuity.

We appreciate your leadership and unwavering support for our National Parks and we look forward to working with you on this historic opportunity on behalf of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

Sincerely,

Marco A. Barros
President & CEO

In addition to the attached letters of support, the following letters were also received:

South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, Chairwoman Jane Thomas

Floresville Economic Development Corporation, Executive Director Jesse M. Perez

Mission Trails Oversight Committee, Co-Chair Milton Guess

National Parks Conservation Association, Suzanne Dixon Regional Director