

Last evening, Representative John Campbell (CA-48) successfully passed H.R. 86, which will place numerous offshore rocks and small islands under the authority of the California Coastal National Monument for long-term maintenance and local stewardship. The legislation will affect approximately 40 rocks located off the coast of Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, and Dana Point.

Upon its passage Campbell said, "This legislation is long overdue. Thankfully, these rocks never had to be used for their intended civil defense purpose, but now 74 years later, it is important that they are preserved so that their aesthetic and ecological qualities are maintained. The best way to do this is through the California Coastal National Monument which will enhance and promote local involvement" Campbell went on to say, "Laguna Beach and Southern Coastal Orange County have some of the most spectacular ocean views and scenic vistas in the world, and my bill will help to preserve that."

Prior to, and during the Second World War, submarines lurking off the coast of Southern California were a frequent worry for many Californians. Intended to be used for the construction of lighthouses and various other civil defense purposes, the rocks were designated to be used by the United States Coast Guard in 1935. 74 years after the initial transfer, the rocks have never been used. H.R. 86 will transfer authority over these rocks to the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) for long-term maintenance and local stewardship.

Located off the 1,100 miles of California coastline, the California Coastal National Monument is comprised of more than 20,000 small islands, rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles between Mexico and Oregon. The scenic qualities and critical habitat of this public resource are protected as part of the National Landscape Conservation System, administered by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Representative Campbell testified in favor of this legislation before the House Committee on Natural Resources on October 1, 2009, and the legislation passed the House overwhelmingly by a vote of 397-4 on December 9, 2009. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) support the passage of this legislation. The bill now awaits consideration by the United States Senate.