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PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION
MERCHANT MARINE
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
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Statement -- Congressman Doug Bosco -- Laguna Public Forum

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the growing effort to preserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

I wish to commend the organizers of this community forum for their continuing efforts to educate the public and governmental decision-makers on the threats facing this unique ecosystem. This raising of public consciousness will be key to our ultimate success at Laguna preservation.

As a member of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, I have witnessed a growing recognition on the part of Congress of the need to protect our dwindling wetlands resources. Presently before the committee is legislation to protect thousands of acres from development pressure in such diverse areas as Rhode Island, North Carolina, and San Francisco. While these measures are meritorious, the fact remains that no area is more deserving, or in more urgent need of protection than the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The multiple threats to the Laguna are real, and demand immediate action from all levels of government.

It is my intention to introduce comprehensive Laguna protection legislation by early next year. This protection may be achieved through the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge. To assist in this effort, I have organized a technical advisory group whose function is to provide me with the information I will need to draft an effective bill. Upon conclusion of the advisory group's work, I will invite public participation in the development of the legislation.

Should we meet with success in achieving some type of reasonable local consensus on the difficult issues of boundaries, management goals, and water supply, I am confident that this legislation will be greeted with enthusiasm in the Congress. As evidenced by the 235 species of birds, 200 types of plant life, and 20 varieties of fish that depend on the Laguna environment, much is at stake in this effort.

I look forward to working closely with you in the months ahead.