

Good Morning, thank you Chair, Ranking Member, and committee for inviting me here today, my name is Karmolette O'Gilvie and I am the Mayor of the City of Twentynine Palms. Thank you for considering H.R. 5355. And just to give you some perspective on what impacts this legislation would have on my community. The City of Twentynine Palms is a small rural disadvantaged community, 1 hour from Palm Springs and 3 hours from Las Vegas. We currently have one grocery store, and the closest Walmart is 30 minutes away. The city is the host City to Twentynine Palms Marine Air/Ground Combat Center, the largest training facility within the Marine Corps. I am the Spouse of a Retired Marine, originally from Texas, so I understand life of Marines that get stationed in our community. One of the attractions to our city is the outdoors, from Joshua Tree National Park to Mojave Desert National Monument, which we are the gateway City. And other desert and private lands in and around for people to enjoy from hiking to motorized sports. Within my city is what we affectionately call the "Hilltopper Land". It is 320 acres of private land, adjacent to the 80 acres in question today, that holds two annual off road motorcycle events per year, one in April, and the second has been from the months of November thru January. This land is managed by the Hilltoppers, a non-profit for over 60 years. At these events there are around 5,000 people in attendance, from locals to Marines to visitors. Several years ago, the Hilltoppers approached the City about renting the adjacent 80 acres, which is the land in discussion today, that will expand the event opportunities for the City. Since that time, we have been working with our Congressman on putting this land into City control to expand the recreational opportunities and events in our community. Although the hilltoppers are the operators of the adjacent land, the owner also wants to expand recreational opportunities and events. The land will stay in control of the City, but we would collaborate with the private owner. The land is extremely rugged, great for offroad motorcycle events, and not for development. So, with all of that, the City respectfully requests this land to be transferred to the control of the City of Twentynine Palms from the Bureau of Land Management.