

**Wally
Herger**
Congressman

2nd District - California



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**House Resources Committee
Approves Herger-Sponsored Legislation to
Secure Recreation Funding for Shasta and Trinity Lakes**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02) today applauded the House Resources Committee for approving his legislation, H.R. 4084, by voice vote (indicating there was no significant opposition). This measure would redirect Forest Service "Special Use Permit" fees that are paid by Shasta and Trinity Lake marina operators from the general treasury in Washington D.C. to the Shasta-Trinity National Forest for use on local recreation projects at the lakes. The legislation would maintain close to \$1 million in the area for maintenance and improvement projects that are designed to enhance visitor experience and safety. The following is Herger's reaction to the committee vote, as well as a copy of his October 27, 2005, testimony in support of the measure.

"I commend the House Resources Committee for their consideration and support of this common sense legislation to improve recreational facilities at Shasta and Trinity Lakes without the imposition of new fees," Herger stated. "Recreation on federal lands is incredibly important to the quality of life in Northern California, and provides a substantial boost to the local economy. My legislation will ensure that close to \$1 million will stay in Northern California to fund local recreation projects instead of being kept in Washington D.C. for use by the government, and it will significantly benefit local marina owners, boaters, campers and fishermen."

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest enrolled Shasta and Trinity lakes in a congressionally authorized recreation pilot project, which allowed close to \$1 million to remain in the local area for recreation projects, but this pilot project was inadvertently repealed last year by a subsequent measure. H.R. 4084 returns the authority to the Forest Service to retain marina permit revenue for local expenditure. Examples of projects that could be funded under the Herger legislation include dock improvements and improved handicapped access, additional law enforcement, and boating safety programs.

Herger continued, "Recreation and tourism are very important to the Shasta and Trinity area. The Resources Committee's approval of this legislation represents another step forward in the process toward enactment into law, and I hope that it will receive consideration on the House floor in the near future," concluded Herger.

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Congressman Herger introduced the measure on October 19, 2005, and offered the following testimony during an October 27, 2005 hearing.

**Prepared Testimony of Congressman Wally Herger
House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
Regarding H.R. 4084
October 27, 2005**

"Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding today's hearing on H.R. 4084, a bill that I introduced to restore the authority of the Forest Service to retain marina fee revenue at the forest level for use on recreation improvement projects.

Through the authority provided in the 1996 'Recreation Fee Demonstration Program,' the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, in my Northern California congressional district, developed a very successful recreation enhancement program at Shasta and Trinity lakes, both of which are located on a subunit of the forest. Under this 'Fee Demo' law, local forest officials kept the vast majority of the revenue generated by issuing houseboat marina permits under their existing special use authority for recreation enhancement and safety improvement projects at the lakes. Such projects included dock repair, better access for the disabled, more restrooms and trashcans, boating safety markers, and campground construction and maintenance.

Marina owners at Shasta and Trinity lakes were thrilled with this program, as they were able to see the fees they paid to the government go to work in substantial, on-the-ground improvement projects. More importantly, the recreating public - estimated to be over 1.5 million visitors per year - enjoyed the success of this program. Over \$4 million has been invested in recreation and safety enhancement projects at Shasta and Trinity lakes since its inception in 1996. As a direct result of this program, money that would have otherwise remained in Washington D.C. was instead invested locally, and recreators are now enjoying a safer, cleaner, and more enjoyable outdoor experience at the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

Regrettably, however, the authority that allowed this program to operate was inadvertently repealed last year with the passage of the 'Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.' H.R. 4084 corrects this unintended consequence by amending the Forest Service's Special Use Permit program to return the recreation and safety project authority to the agency. Though the Shasta-Trinity National Forest in my district is the unit that is most affected by this legislation, other forests, such as the Tonto, the Ashley, and the Willamette, would also receive a boost in their recreation infrastructure budget with its enactment.

Nationally, this legislation would retain just over one million dollars at the local forest level for safety and recreation improvements. Some may argue that this bill 'costs' the government money, or that it 'scores' against the deficit. I would simply ask you to consider the policy at question here.

The Forest Service partners with local small business owners to enhance the recreation experience on federal lands by allowing them to operate businesses - in this case houseboat marinas - in exchange for an occupancy fee. H.R. 4084 restores the authority of the Forest

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Service to keep these fee proceeds at the local level - where their impact on the National Forest is the most direct and apparent - rather than letting this money remain in Washington D.C. for general agency uses.

Viewed in this light, there is no 'cost' to the government. What's more, there is no cost to the public or to marina operators. There are no new fees involved with this legislation, only a restoration of authority to allow fees already being paid to remain at the local level for new projects that stand to make recreation on the National Forest system safer and more enjoyable.

Thank you again for including my legislation in today's hearing. I look forward to answering any questions you might have."