The Central Coast is renowned for its scenic landscapes and vibrant environment. The Carrizo Plain National Monument east of San Luis Obispo is a key contributor to this well-deserved reputation. 

After years of terrible drought in California, much-needed rain brought the hills of the Carrizo Plain brilliantly alive, blanketed by purple and gold wildflowers. Thousands of visitors flocked to witness the "superbloom." 

LOCAL VIEWPOINT

If you think the Carrizo Plain is worth protecting, tell Trump

Declaring the Carrizo Plain National Monument now the largest undeveloped remnant of this thriving ecosystem, it continues to provide crucial habitats for the conservation of numerous plants and animals, including the protected species San Joaquin kit fox and giant kangaroo rat and the California condor.

The size and isolation of the plain has made it ideal for long-term conservation efforts, and essential for safeguarding the plants and animals native to the Central Coast. Soda Lake is the rarest landmark in the Carrizo Plains, as it is the largest remaining alkaline wetland in southern California and the only closed basin within the coastal mountains. The spectacular geological features across the Carrizo Plain were created by the San Andreas Fault, as the national monument is nestled right along the fault line.

The Carrizo Plain offers more than protection of natural wonders, it also preserves Painted Rock, a sacred site for Native Americans. The 4,000-year-old pictographs are considered some of the finest examples of rock art in the world.

Central Coast residents know these monuments are not only critical to protecting unique landscapes and ecological habitats for endangered species, they are also an economic engine. The monument brings flocks of people to the Central Coast from across the nation and the globe that invest in our local businesses and tourism economy, contributing to the $1.59 billion in annual travel spending in San Luis Obispo County.

This year, Congressman Carbajal will introduce legislation to further protect natural areas of the Central Coast within both the Carrizo Plain National Monument and the Los Padres National Forest, building on the important work that former Congresswoman Capps did to protect this special place.

It is vital that the Central Coast stand united against this threat. The Department of the Interior has opened a comment period through July 10.

By Salud Carbajal

As your current and former representative for the Central Coast, we will continue to fight to protect our invaluable open spaces. California’s 24th Congressional District is easily one of the most vibrant and ecologically diverse districts in Congress, which is why we are dedicated to preserving our environment from irreparable damage.

Salud Carbajal, D-Santa Barbara, was elected in November after the retirement of Adam Smith.