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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2015

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Bill Introduced to Designate John Wayne Airport as a Port of Entry

(Santa Ana, CA) - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher and Congresswoman Mimi Walters have introduced a bill, H.R. 1051, that would require the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security to designate John Wayne Airport (JWA) as a Port of Entry.

A Port of Entry airport provides customs and immigration services for arriving foreign visitors on incoming flights. The designation is made through U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

“John Wayne Airport has served more than 600,000 passengers traveling between Orange County and destinations in Mexico since our international arrivals facility opened in June 2012,” said Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Todd Spitzer, who represents the 3rd District. “This Port of Entry designation is critical to Orange County’s ability to attract and sustain the international air service that is so important to our community and to our economy.”

Supervisor Michelle Steel, whose 2nd District includes the airport, said, “We look forward to successfully designating John Wayne Airport as a Port of Entry to better serve our residents, visitors and the international flights of our airlines.”

Rep. Sanchez said she raised the need for Port of Entry status several times with the administration without success. The designation would remove the airport from the current requirement to collect user fees for processing international flights, which “puts the burden of CBP operations unfairly on the back of travelers,” she said.

“John Wayne Airport is an international airport that deserves the official designation as a Port of Entry,” said Sanchez, who represents the 46th Congressional District.

Rep. Mimi Walters, whose 45th Congressional District includes the airport, said she was pleased to join her colleagues in supporting this important bill for Orange County. “By designating John Wayne as a Port of Entry, we are allowing the airport to attract and retain international air service, while also reducing excessive governmental fees for international travelers,” she said.

As a User Fee airport, JWA is required to reimburse CBP for 100% of the costs of federal inspection services. Since June 2012, JWA has paid more than \$4 million in fees, costs that are passed on to the airlines receiving the services and, ultimately, to the traveling public.

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