



City Clerk Council and Public Services <clerk.cps@lacity.org>

Fwd: Center for Biological Diversity Letter in Opposition to Termination of Wildlife Pilot Study

1 message

Anna Martinez <anna.martinez@lacity.org>
To: City Clerk Council and Public Services <Clerk.CPS@lacity.org>

Fri, May 8, 2020 at 2:03 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: 'J.P. Rose' via Clerk - CityClerk <cityclerk@lacity.org>
Date: Fri, May 8, 2020 at 1:56 PM
Subject: Center for Biological Diversity Letter in Opposition to Termination of Wildlife Pilot Study
To: CityClerk@lacity.org <CityClerk@lacity.org>
Cc: greg.good@lacity.org <greg.good@lacity.org>

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

Please see the attached letter from the Center for Biological Diversity in opposition to the removal of the Wildlife Pilot Study from the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Proposal.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

-J.P.

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Center for Biological Diversity Letter re Wildlife Pilot Study 5-8-2020 Final.pdf
125K



May 8, 2020

Sent via email

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
City Hall - Room 360
Los Angeles, CA 90012
CityClerk@lacity.org

Re: Opposition to 2019/20 Open Budget Termination of the Wildlife Pilot Study (CF 20-0600)

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers:

As the authors of the [Petition](#) to List the Southern California/Central Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of Mountain Lions as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), we strongly oppose the removal of the Wildlife Pilot Study from the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Proposal. Eliminating the Wildlife Pilot Study would undermine the City's efforts to protect local mountain lions and other wildlife and contradict Mayor Garcetti's commitment to a Green New Deal.

Background on the Center

The Center for Biological Diversity ("Center") is a non-profit, public interest environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental law. The Center has over 1.7 million members and online activists throughout California and the United States. The Center and its members have worked for many years to protect imperiled plants and wildlife, open space, air and water quality, and overall quality of life for people in Los Angeles.

Local mountain lions are at risk of extinction due to lack of connectivity.

As you may know, local mountain lions are at risk of extinction, and extensive research indicates that existing highway and development networks have separated the state's mountain lion population into multiple isolated populations, which has led to high levels of inbreeding and poor genetic health (Ernest et al. 2014; Riley et al. 2014; Vickers et al. 2015; Gustafson et al. 2018; Benson et al. 2019). Low genetic diversity combined with high human-caused mortalities (e.g., from car strikes, depredation kills, rodenticide poisoning, and poaching) threaten the long-term survival of several populations, particularly smaller populations in Southern California and along the Central Coast.

According to Gustafson et al. (2018), mountain lions in the Santa Ana and Santa Monica mountains have the lowest genetic diversity of any mountain lion populations in the U.S., aside from endangered Florida panthers. Lack of connectivity is the primary driver of these

populations' demise. If nothing is done to improve connectivity and reduce human-caused mortalities, these populations could become extinct within 50 years (Benson et al. 2019). Mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains are showing similar trends of genetic isolation and inbreeding (Gustafson et al. 2018; Saremi et al. 2019).

There is broad public support for wildlife connectivity and local mountain lions.

Given the perilous situation of local mountain lions, the California Fish and Game Commission voted on April 16, 2020 to grant Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions candidate species status under the California Endangered Species Act. The unanimous vote came after nearly [one hundred organizations](#) signed a letter supporting the vote, thousands of community members wrote to the commission, and the editorial board of the *Los Angeles Times* [wrote in favor](#) of the listing, as did former State Senator and chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, [Fran Pavley](#). City Councilmembers Paul Koretz, David Ryu, and Bob Blumenfield also introduced a resolution supporting the listing of mountain lions and acknowledging that functioning and healthy ecosystems are essential to the continued health and well-being of Angelenos and human beings around the world.

Safeguarding wildlife connectivity and mountain lions requires immediate city action.

Ensuring wildlife connectivity for mountain lions and other species will take sustained action at the local level. This is particularly true because local government generally has land use authority. Neighboring Ventura County recently adopted a first-of-its-kind wildlife connectivity ordinance to help ensure that local land use decisions do not impair connectivity for local wildlife. The City of L.A. can and should be a leader on this issue and continue to fund the Wildlife Pilot Study. Ending the Wildlife Pilot Study now would undermine the City's role as a leader in promoting healthy ecosystems and communities.

We understand the City must make difficult financial decisions during these challenging times. However, shortchanging local wildlife – which are critical to the health of both our communities and ecosystems – is foolish and counterproductive. We urge you to include the Wildlife Pilot Study in next year's budget.

Sincerely,



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