



**Friends of Griffith Park**

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February 28, 2018

RE: 03-1459-S3, Support for Protected Tree Ordinance Amendment

We welcome the initiative by Councilmembers Koretz and Bonin to bring various City departments together to strengthen the Protected Tree Ordinance of 2006. The intention of a revived ordinance should be to save as many native trees and shrubs as possible for our outdoor living space. Saving native habitat keeps Los Angeles on the world map as a City celebrating its Mediterranean habitat, unique to only a very small geographic area of the world!

The Los Angeles area is one of the most biodiverse zones in the world. Urban living can mean an abundance of urban wildlife if the habitat with which that wildlife evolved stays intact. For this reason, the Planning Department should take great interest in this important matter of protecting our rich natural resources. This is especially important as our climate warms, with indigenous trees already having other environmental stressors.

Regrettably, many people do not realize the value of native habitat when they remove oaks, toyon, elderberry, walnut and bay laurel from around their homes. And sometimes these removals are completely unnecessary. So, education along with stricter regulation should also be a goal in order to achieve compliance at the lowest enforcement expense.

We fully support adding native toyon and elderberry to the protected tree list. These species become even more important in the mix of habitat as insect infestations reduce the numbers of mature oaks and sycamores. They also should be considered excellent choices for beefing up mitigation options when permits are issued, especially since they need little care and water.

Brush modification procedures occurring within 200 feet of structures has become a major threat to medium height species such as toyon, mountain mahogany and elderberry, since they are often not seen as trees. For this reason we hope that the City is able coordinate a message to the various parties (eg, LAFD, RAP) responsible for brush clearance. These species, along with the current protected trees, are major assets for retaining Southern California's reputation for rich and native flora and fauna.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge  
President

Gerry Hans  
VP, Science and Conservation

