



April 14, 2017



Assemblymember Richard Bloom
 P.O. Box 942849
 Sacramento, CA 94249-0050

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 8 - Options for issuing mountain lion depredation permits.

Dear Assemblymember Bloom,

The undersigned organizations write to convey our support for allowing the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) greater flexibility in responding to mountain lion depredations. We appreciate that if enacted, your AB 8 will allow CDFW to tailor their response to the specific circumstances of the incident, providing a wider variety of management tools and greater protection for livestock, people and lions.

Changes to California’s mountain lion protection statute are needed so that CDFW is engaged to help better assess the underlying causes of specific depredations, provide suggestions for avoiding future conflicts, offer alternative deterrent actions short of lethal control, and to consider the interests of the mountain lion population prior to issuing a permit authorizing the mountain lion to be killed.

Thousands of mountain lions have been killed through issuance of these permits in California: 100 lions in 2016 alone. Scientists know very little about mountain lion populations in the state, although recent research has demonstrated that some populations are isolated, genetically compromised, at very low densities, and may be threatened with extirpation within decades.

Equally significant, recent research has shown that killing a lion does not adequately address the underlying causes of depredation – primarily failures in animal husbandry and protection practices in known mountain lion territories – and may even increase the frequency of further conflict.

CDFW necropsy reports show that only 40 percent of the lions killed on depredation permits in 2016 could be verified to have preyed on domestic animals by examination of their stomach contents. When well-established and non-depredating lions are killed, territories open up that may be filled by younger lions who compete for food, and conflicts may actually increase for miles around.

It is also significant that although people tend to think of depredations as events related to large herds of cattle, the sad reality is that most lions killed on depredation permits are targeted for preying on goats. The vast majority of these goats are kept in groups of 5-10 on very small acreages, and could be very easily protected by penning in secure enclosures from dusk to dawn.

Thank you for introducing AB 8 to expand the options that may be presented to the owners of domestic animals, many of whom would prefer an alternative that did not require killing a mountain lion.

We appreciate your leadership and are grateful for your effort to provide greater safety to people and domestic animals, while promoting protection of the most vulnerable populations of mountain lions in California as well.

Sincerely,

Nicole Paquette
Vice President, Wildlife Protection
The Humane Society of the United States

Ron Sundergill
Senior Director - Pacific Region Office
National Parks Conservation Association

Brendan Cummings
Conservation Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Damon Nagami
Director, S. California Ecosystems Project
Natural Resources Defense Council

Jena Price
Legislative Affairs Manager
California League of Conservation Voters

Howard Penn
Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League

Lindsay Larris
Los Angeles Regional Director
Animal Legal Defense Fund

Dan Jacobson
State Director
Environment California

Edward Moreno
Policy Advocate
Sierra Club - California

Rick Hopkins, Ph.D.
President of the Board
The Cougar Fund

Tom Wheeler
Executive Director (EPIC)
Environmental Protection Information Center

Camilla Fox
Executive Director
Project Coyote

Paula Kislak, DVM
Member, Board of Directors
The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association

Zara McDonald
Executive Director
Felidae Conservation Fund

Kim Sturla
Executive Director
Animal Place

Eric Mills
Coordinator
Action for Animals

Marilyn Jasper
President
Clover Valley Foundation

Tom Athanasiou
Director
EcoEquity

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Kate Dylewsky
Program Associate
Born Free USA

Miriam Seger
Board Representative
Project Bobcat

Jennifer Scarlett, DVM
President
San Francisco SPCA

Mollie Hogan
Executive Director
The Nature of Wildworks

Tom O'Key
Founder
Southern California Desert Video Astronomers

Ali Crumpacker
Director
The Fund For Animals Wildlife Center

Vicki Long
President
Cougar Connection

Todd Steiner
Executive Director
Turtle Island Restoration Network

Rob and Barbara Dicely
Founder, Executive Director
Wild Cat Education and Conservation Fund

Claire Schlotterbeck
Executive Director
Hills For Everyone

Marilyn Kroplick, MD
President
In Defense of Animals

Elisabeth M. Brown, Ph.D
President
Laguna Greenbelt, Inc.

Jeff Kuyper
Executive Director
Los Padres ForestWatch

Leigh Bittner
Managing Director
Wildlife Research Institute

Kian Schulman RN,MSN
Director
Poison Free Malibu

Alison Simard
Chair
Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW)

Pat Smith
Executive Director
EarthShare California

Sharon Negri
Founding Director
WildFutures

Lisa Owens
Director
Raptors Are The Solution

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League