Mountain Lion Foundation Applauds California Legislature’s Passage of SB 132 to Protect Wayward Mountain Lions

Bill provides CDFW with tools, training and partnerships to use nonlethal methods.

The Mountain Lion Foundation (MLF) applauds the California Legislature for voting to curtail the inhumane practice of killing mountain lions that come into contact with people but pose no imminent threat to public safety.

Senate Bill 132 -- authored by Senator Jerry Hill, D-Santa Clara -- now advances to the Governor’s desk with widespread public support.

Senate Bill 132 -- authored by Senator Jerry Hill, D-Santa Clara -- passed the Senate and Assembly unanimously, but returned to the Senate floor today for a final vote on amendments made in the Assembly. The bill passed the concurrence vote with only two nay votes, easily achieving the 4/5ths vote required for changes to Proposition 117, the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.

“With this very important vote, California is one step closer to ending the unnecessary killing of mountain lions.” said Timothy Dunbar, Executive Director of the Foundation. “We applaud Senator Hill for recognizing the value of mountain lions to California’s environment and for championing nonlethal responses to mountain lion encounters.”

Hill said the legislation will allow the CDFW to partner with wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups, veterinarians, zoos, colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations throughout the state that have the capability and experience to assist with mountain lion incidents.

“Wardens still have the ability to kill mountain lions when the public is at risk,” said Hill. “This legislation gives wardens the flexibility and resources to better deal with the increasing number of mountain lion encounters throughout the state.”

“California’s mountain lions are under tremendous survival pressure as we continue to encroach on their territories,” added Toby Cooper, Chairman of the Board of MLF. “It is an archaic and unacceptable practice to kill mountain lions merely for being seen.”

When California Department of Fish and Wildlife and local first responders are called out to investigate reports of mountain lions the situations range from simple sightings in the wild to the presence of lions in developed areas or encounters with people. Many of these reports need not be addressed at all but others merit investigation and possible action when lions are perceived to be “too close for comfort.” Many of these investigated situations do not threaten public safety and can be resolved without killing a lion.

For more information about mountain lions and mountain lion safety, visit www.mountainlion.org.

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- Mountain lions are of great value to California’s ecosystems.
- While we don’t know how many lions there are in California we do know that they continue to be stressed by habitat loss, road kill, and lethal reactions to human encounters.
- In some areas of the state, small mountain lion populations have become trapped by urban development and we are beginning to see signs of inbreeding. In these regions each and every lion plays an important role in the species' survival.
- The California Farm Bureau and the California Cattlemen’s Association withdrew opposition to the bill after working with the Mountain Lion Foundation to craft the text of the bill.
- Thousands of Californians including wildlife advocates, ranchers, hunters and landowners have written or called in support of S.B. 132.
- Many of the bill’s supporters represent partnership opportunities for CDFW when the bill becomes law, including zoos, veterinarians, wildlife advocates, wildlife rehabilitation and animal sheltering organizations.
- Organizations in support of the legislation include Action for Animals, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Animal Rescue Team, Born Free USA, Earth Island Institute’s Wildlife Alive Project, East Bay Regional Park District, Feline Conservation Center, Felidae Conservation Fund, Fund for Animals, Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), In Defense of Animals, Marin Humane Society, Mountain Lion Foundation (MLF), Oakland Zoo, Ojai Wildlife League, PawPAC, Planning and Conservation League (PCL), Project Coyote, Public Interest Coalition, Sierra Club California, Sierra Nevada Alliance, and Wildlife Emergency Services.