



# CITIZENS FOR LOS ANGELES WILDLIFE

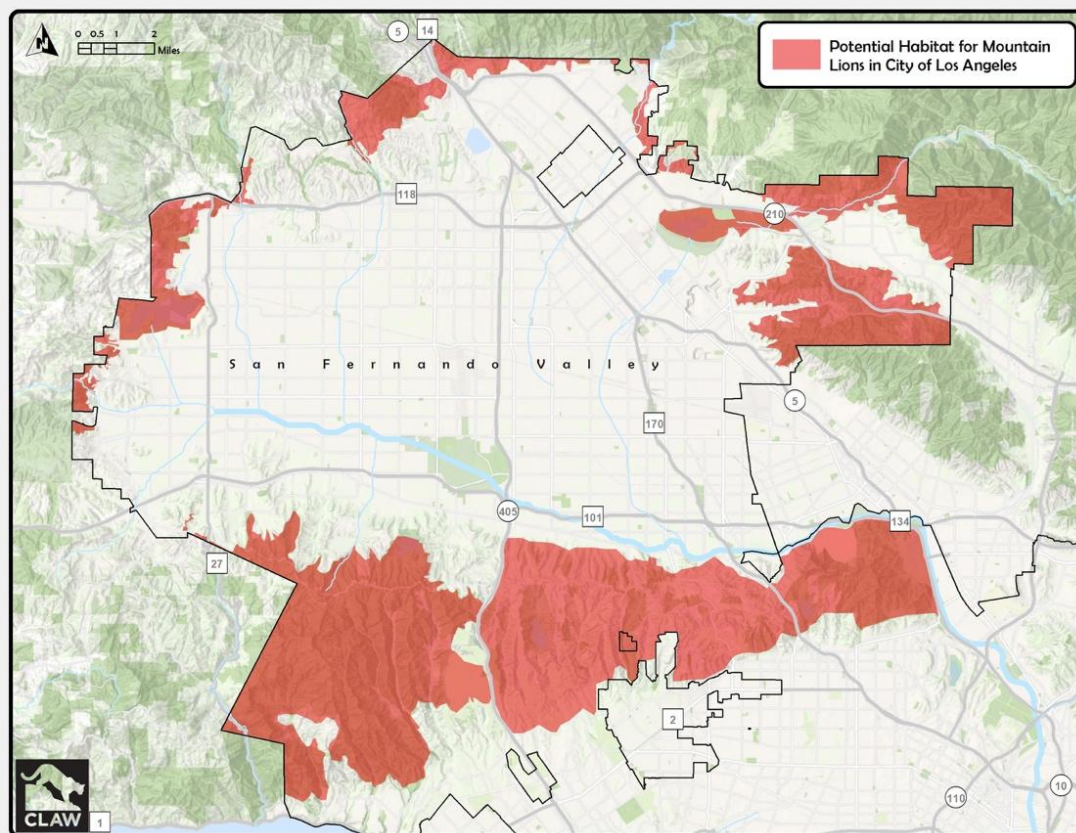
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May 1, 2020

Vince Bertoni, Director  
Los Angeles City Planning  
200 N. Spring Street, Suite 525  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Director Bertoni,

Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) would like to share information about an immediate shift in regional mountain lion status under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), a shift which compliments your department's work on the "Wildlife Pilot Study" and supports CLAW's efforts in healthy connective habitat and open space. On April 16, the California Fish and Game Commission accepted a petition to classify mountain lions of six regions in California as "threatened." Two of those regions, the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains, include the city of Los Angeles. This is meaningful because it will immediately impact how we plan and develop the mountains, hillsides, and canyons for much of our city.



*The areas shaded in red show a conservative estimate of where development will have an impact on mountain lion habitat.*

Today, the California Regulatory Notice Register published the Fish and Game Commission's findings. Effective immediately in the regions described above, the following exemption criterion under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) can no longer be met: "The Project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species." Therefore, **Los Angeles City Planning should no longer accept CEQA's Urban Infill/Class 32 Categorical Exemption, putting an end to the issuance of Notice of Exemptions for many hillside single family dwelling projects.** CLAW has always been concerned that just one overlooked or ill-placed project can sever habitat connectivity, and we are thrilled that this additional discretionary review will be required until the Wildlife Pilot Study (as well as future Protection Areas for Wildlife) are protected under ordinance.

Given the critical conditions our regional mountain lions face, the additional discretionary review required under CEQA will help ensure habitat connectivity remains as a part of our city's future. As the designation is immediate, CLAW will help apprise the Council Districts with territory and future planning projects in hillside regions that are now impacted. We thank you and your staff in advance for embracing the additional work that may impact your department, and we hope the new CESA designation is welcomed by all in the department. These efforts will not only ensure the survival of our mountain lions, but will support LA City Planning's efforts in conservation, open space, and balanced neighborhood priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony T.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tony Tucci, Chair

cc: Kevin Keller, Executive Officer  
Arthi Varma, Deputy Director of Policy Planning  
Shana Bonstin, Deputy Director of Community Planning  
Lisa Webber, Deputy Director of Project Planning  
Conni Pallini, Senior City Planner

*CLAW is a public benefit non-profit 501(c)(3) environmental organization that works to protect and restore the environments of wildlife of Los Angeles and California from dwindling open spaces. Our mission is to promote educate and protect the fundamental importance of wildlife, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors everywhere.*