MBCA

morongo basin conservation association

April 10, 2020

Mr. Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commissioners
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via email: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Dear Mr. Sklar,

We are writing in support of increased protections for mountain lions in California. As a top predator in the natural environment, the health of the mountain lion is essential to the well-being of the entire ecosystem.

Threats to the mountain lion are well documented. Their population numbers are dwindling to frighteningly low levels. In-breeding due to fragmentation of their habitat has resulted in physical deformities. The California Department of Fish and Game Commission must act swiftly to preserve the long-term survival of the Ecologically Significant Unit of mountain lions in Southern and Central Coastal California. We strongly recommend the California Fish and Game Commission initiate a full status review and then advance Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions to candidacy as 'threatened' under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The CESA will require agencies work to provide for the recovery and long-term survival of the listed species.

The Morongo Basin Conservation Association was founded in 1969 and is the oldest conservation based organization in the high desert region of southern California. The protections under consideration by the Commission are based on genetics and known connectivity to Joshua Tree National Park. Mountain lion sightings are regularly reported in our area and protecting the mountain lion in coastal areas will benefit the species in the extended range desert ecosystem.

Our mission is to advocate for the healthy desert. Listing of the mountain lion as threatened will drive support for their health and the intertwined ecosystem upon which all life depends.

Sincerely,

Steve Bardwell, president
Morongo Basin Conservation Association