

Communication from Public

Name: Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife
Date Submitted: 09/09/2022 04:50 PM
Council File No: 21-1284
Comments for Public Posting: Please accept the attached CLAW letter of SUPPORT for the SMMC Trustee Agency Resolution. And please move this through Council expeditiously.



CITIZENS FOR
LOS ANGELES
WILDLIFE

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September 9, 2022

Council President Nury Martinez,
& Los Angeles City Council c/o City Clerk
200 N. Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Support for Resolution Acknowledging Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as a Trustee Agency to the City of Los Angeles (CF 21-1284)

Honorable President Martinez and City Councilmembers:

Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) is a non-profit environmental organization concerned with the wellbeing of wildlife and wildlife habitat for the City of Los Angeles and beyond. A citizenry of more than 5,000 individuals support our organization's multiple calls for biodiverse practices and policy to benefit LA City, County, California and the globe. CLAW stands in strong support of the City Council resolution to memorialize Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) as a trustee agency in accordance with California's Public Resources Code and CEQA.

SMMC was established in 1979 and the legislation that founded this agency notes that the Santa Monica Mountains Zone (Zone) "exists as a single ecosystem in which changes that affect one part may also affect all other parts; and that the preservation and protection of this resource is in the public interest." For more than four decades, this agency has acted effectively on behalf of the public's interest in the preservation of the unique flora and fauna of the Zone, as well as championing recreational access to the mountains. Simply put, they are the top experts when it comes to the ecology of the fragile and critical Santa Monica Mountains Zone.

While the CEQA process is invaluable in protecting natural resources and habitat, CEQA's efficacy is only as strong as the parties involved in the process. Over the years and up to this moment, the mountains of Los Angeles have suffered countless poorly mitigated, ill-advised projects that have snuck past important CEQA scrutiny, leading to developments that fragment habitat, egregiously alter the landscape, and affect natural microclimates. With the City's official recognition and establishment of SMMC as a trustee agency and, therefore, as an integral and ongoing part of the project review process, wildlife and important native plants will have a strong and knowledgeable advocate.

This resolution is an important step forward in preserving the ecology and iconic landscape of LA's mountains and it is encouraging that essentially six councilmembers are already in support of the SMMC Trustee Agency Resolution. But, since the resolution states that it will only be applied prospectively, time is of the essence. CLAW asks the City Council to swiftly move forward the adoption of this item, as no projects will be provided the benefits of SMMC input until the date this resolution becomes effective.

Sincerely,

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

Tony Tucci, Chair

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.