



**Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF TULARE
AGENDA ITEM**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

KUYLER CROCKER
District One

PETE VANDER POEL
District Two

AMY SHUKLIAN
District Three

EDDIE VALERO
District Four

DENNIS TOWNSEND
District Five

AGENDA DATE: November 5, 2019

Public Hearing Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Published Notice Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advertised Published Notice	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meet & Confer Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Electronic file(s) has been sent	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Personnel Resolution attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agreements are attached and signature line for Chairman is marked with tab(s)/flag(s)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONTACT PERSON: Julieta Martinez PHONE: 559-636-5000				

SUBJECT: Oppose Petition – Mountain Lion Designation

REQUEST(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Approve sending a letter to the California Fish and Game Commission opposing a petition to list an evolutionarily significant unit of mountain lions in southern and central coastal California as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

SUMMARY:

On June 25, 2019, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation submitted a petition to list the southern and central coast California Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of mountain lions as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) distributed a notice of the petition on July 16, 2019. Pursuant to Section 2073 of Fish and Game Code, the Commission transmitted the petition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) for review. The Commission is scheduled to receive the Department's petition evaluation report at its December 11-12, 2019 meeting in Sacramento. All agencies wishing to submit a public comment are encouraged to do so by November 20, 2019 so that they are incorporated into the review in December 2019.

Attached is a draft comment letter of the Board's opposition to the petition to designate the mountain lion as an endangered species. Staff is requesting the Board approve the letter so that it can be submitted to the California Fish and Game Commission by November 20, 2019.

SUBJECT: Oppose Petition – Mountain Lion Designation

DATE: November 5, 2019


FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

There is no fiscal impact with sending the letter of opposition.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

The opposition to the petition supports the Economic Well-Being strategic initiative by promoting economic development opportunities, effective growth management, and a quality standard of living.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:



Julieta Martinez
Chief of Staff

cc: County Administrative Office

Attachment(s) Letter of Opposition

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

IN THE MATTER OF OPPOSE PETITION -)
MOUNTAIN LION DESIGNATION) Resolution No. _____
Agreement No. _____

UPON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR _____, SECONDED BY
SUPERVISOR _____, THE FOLLOWING WAS ADOPTED BY THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AT AN OFFICIAL MEETING HELD _____
_____, BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST: JASON T. BRITT
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/
CLERK, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

* * * * *

Approved sending a letter to the California Fish and Game Commission opposing a petition to list an evolutionarily significant unit of mountain lions in southern and central coastal California as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

November 5, 2019

California Fish and Game Commission
PO BOX 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244

RE: Opposition to Petition by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the County of Tulare, we write to respectfully inform you of our opposition to the petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation to list an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) in southern and central coastal California as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

Petitioners are recommending that the State consider a group of six subpopulations of mountain lions as a single ESU. This designation could add sweeping protections to mountain lion territories covering as much as a third of the State. According to the petition, there is no reliable estimate of mountain lion abundance in California and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently undertaking a large scale research effort to estimate the mountain lion population throughout California.

It is also recommended to include mountain lions in the Tehachapi and Sierra Pelona Mountains south of the SR-58 in this ESU. This link is said to serve as a connecting link between mountain lion populations comprising the Southern California/Central Coast ESU, but also between the ESU and all other California mountain lions. The petition states this is essential for the overall genetic health of mountain lions in the state.

Although the current proposed boundaries do not include the Western Sierra Nevada and Tulare County as a whole, the petition brings concern to residents and business communities in the foothill and mountain communities throughout the entire state. Current law considers mountain lions as a "specially protected species," and limits how they can be hunted. In 2019 alone, there were two sightings of a mountain lion in the City of Tulare, one in April and the other in June. Both incidents required the local police department, animal control officers, and state official to intervene in order to capture the mammal and release it back into the forest land. Both incidents placed fear among all community members as it was no longer safe to be out in their own backyards. When faced with such danger, residents cannot take action against a lion without the fear of repercussion and fines from the State. These sightings do not include the many interactions that residents in the rural mountain communities have already experienced.

As submitted in June of 2019, the petition claims that habitat loss and fragmentation due to roads and development have led to extreme levels of isolation and high mortality rates. It further states that the greatest threats the lions have faces over the past century is human's steady encroachment into wildland-urban interface. A designation such as the one being requested would

target new development and limit new construction. It would change how state and local agencies plan and build infrastructure which in turn could lead to higher costs and bigger roadblocks.

We oppose the recommendation by the petitioners linking mountain lions in the Western Sierra Nevada and Northern California to the overall genetic health of the Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions. There is no guarantee that the boundaries will be approved as is or that there will be no further efforts to expand in later years to include the Western Sierra Nevada and other northern areas. Designations like this are detrimental to the overall economic development of the state and threaten local governments ability to thrive in a changing economy.

A designation such as the one requested would have a direct negative impact to State and County services.

For these reasons, the County of Tulare is in opposition of the Petition. Please contact our office should you have any further questions at (559) 636-5000.

Sincerely,

Kuyler Crocker, Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Pete Vander Poel, Vice-Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Amy Shuklian, District Three
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Eddie Valero, District Four
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Dennis Townsend, District Five
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

CC: Tulare County Delegation
Paul Yoder, Shaw/Yoder/Antwih, inc.