

Attachment "C"

Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles

Re: Big Wild – Topanga State Park Core Habitat Area Planning Map (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy)

Dear Mayor Garcetti:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) is the principal State planning agency for the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, which contains a significant portion of the City of Los Angeles. Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council brings to your attention the current initiative by SMMC to specifically map habitat blocks within this zone. We request that the City support this effort and encourage cooperation between the City's biodiversity initiative (Department of Sanitation and Environment), the Department of City Planning (especially the Wildlife Pilot Project initiation and environmental review sections), and SMMC to ensure that City policies and practices are consistent with the goals and formal designations by SMMC.

By way of background, we observe that the City routinely exempts single-family residential home projects from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As a result, there are significant direct and cumulative impacts on the environment from these developments that are not mitigated. Better coordination between the City and SMMC would lead to the City recognizing the duly mapped environmental resources of critical concern such as the Santa Monica Mountains Zone and finding that those properties within such mapped areas are not exempt from review. The SMMC is furthermore currently mapping "core habitat areas" for the region west of the 405 Freeway, which will constitute a detailed map of habitat blocks recognized and precisely mapped that meet the definition of being an environmental resource of critical concern.

Although the entire Santa Monica Mountains Zone should be afforded higher scrutiny during environmental review as an environmental resource of critical concern, the City should welcome the additional designation of core habitat blocks within this zone by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as definitive and precisely mapped guidance for locations where new development should undergo additional scrutiny. Parcels within these habitat blocks should not be exempted from review under CEQA through one of the exceptions upon which the City relies heavily to avoid grappling with the individual and cumulative consequences of single family (now actually multifamily with the addition of ADUs) development in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Sincerely,

Robin Greenberg

Cc:

Vince Bertoni, Director City Planning
Mas Dojiri, Assistant General Manager, Sanitation and Environment
Nithya Raman, Councilmember, District 4
Paul Koretz, Councilmember, District 5
Mike Bonin, Councilmember, District 11
Paul Edelman, Deputy Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy