

Submitter: Samuel Terrell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB769

Mountain Lion Hunting

Hunting in the modern world is a symbolic behavior: it is a pastime, tradition, and sometimes a spiritual experience. These are important parts of a complicated reality, but there are even more nuanced aspects. Particularly when some need to kill to protect their livelihood and/or maintain ecosystems.

Hunting is a means of bridging urban and rural expectations of how humans should interact with wildlife. It holds a strong place in conservation, wildlife management, and mitigating the effects of depredation. Harvesting animals for the sake of ecosystem maintenance is a practice that is beneficial for both humans and the entirety of species we hope to protect.

Limiting methods of take, ie hunting mountain lions with dogs, makes conservation efforts difficult for wildlife managers and constituents alike. It is an ethical and effective management tool, but is often frowned upon due to a want to alleviate the weight of these necessary actions on a voter's conscience.

We should avoid making ecological mistakes, especially where the uninformed public votes upon ballot initiatives pertaining to wildlife management practices. We must strive to produce legislation strictly from the science of ecology. It is difficult to balance the needs of successful megafauna management in a context where the science of their wellbeing is unclear, and in a time when the politics of hunting are so contested.

If ecological scientists, conservationist groups, and hunters work together to harbor a more holistic view of ecosystems and the way humans interact with them, we may all be able to enjoy the wild spaces, and the species we strive to protect, in perpetuity, however different our methods may be.