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Assembly California Legislature



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May 19, 2014

Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Charlton Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Headquarters
1416 9th Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Directors Mastrup and Bonham:

I write to inquire about the status of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Game Commission's plans and efforts to implement and enforce the provisions of AB 1213, the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013, which was signed into law last year. As you are aware, I introduced the bill in response to an increase in commercial trapping of bobcats throughout the State, and particular concerns that such trapping was detrimentally impacting national parks and other protected areas, as well as the interests of private landowners. The bill resulted in several changes to the Fish and Game Code regarding trapping, some of which are already in effect, with others to be implemented later this year and in subsequent trapping seasons. Additionally, Governor Brown, when signing the bill, directed the Department and Commission to carry out additional measures related to the management of bobcats. In that context, I respectfully request responses to the following questions, along with any relevant supporting information.

New code section 4155(a) established a trapping prohibition around Joshua Tree National Park, effective January 1, 2014.

-What measures have the Department and/or Commission taken to notify individuals holding trapping licenses for the 2013/2014 season of this new provision?

-What measures has the Department taken to enforce this provision of law?

New code section 4155(d) prohibited trapping on private land absent the written permission of the landowner, effective January 1, 2014.

-What measures have the Department and/or Commission taken to notify individuals holding trapping licenses for the 2013/2014 season of this new provision?

-What measures has the Department taken to enforce this provision of law?

Existing code section 4006(c) requires the Commission to set trapping license fees at a level sufficient to recoup all reasonable costs of both the Department and Commission in administering the trapping program. New code section 4155(e) sets a deadline of the 2014/2015 license season for the Commission to come into compliance with this provision of law.

-What measures have the Department and/or Commission taken to come into compliance with these requirements?

-Will the setting of new trapping license fees for 2014/2015 be subject to a public process through Commission meetings or otherwise?

-What are the Department's estimated costs for administering, implementing and enforcing the trapping program, both overall and specifically as to bobcats?

-What are the Commission's estimated costs for administering and implementing the trapping program, both overall and specifically as to bobcats?

When AB 1213 was being considered by the legislature, the Department estimated that it would cost an additional \$605,000 to administer, implement and enforce the provisions of the bill in its first year and \$342,000 annually thereafter, above and beyond its existing costs to administer, implement and enforce the overall trapping program.

-How are the Department and Commission incorporating such costs into their calculations of the appropriate trapping license fee for 2014/2015?

New code sections 4155(b) requires the Commission to establish additional no trapping buffers in and around national and state parks, refuges, preserves and other protected areas over the course of the next two years.

-On what schedule and by what process do the Department and Commission intend to implement these provisions of law and when do you anticipate there will be opportunities for public participation?

Thank you for your prompt responses to these questions.

Finally, in his signing message, the Governor requested that the Department work with the Legislature to seek funding to update its bobcat population estimates, and for the Department and Commission to consider setting thresholds and bag limits through its upcoming rulemaking. Please let me know what I can do to assist the Department in securing funding to implement the Governor's recommendations. As the author of AB 1213 I am committed to the bill's expeditious and effective implementation. Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or if I can otherwise assist in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Bloom", written in a cursive style.

RICHARD BLOOM
Assemblymember, 50th District

Cc: Susan T. LaGrande, Deputy Director for Legislation