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P.O. Box 406
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

April 18, 2014

President Michael Sutton
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Commissioner Sutton,

I attended the Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting in Ventura on April 16, 2014, arriving early so I could secure a front row seat, but I did not speak.

The California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators (CCWR) belatedly learned that item #14 on the agenda was going to be a discussion of the regulations regarding wildlife rehabilitation. After hearing Commissioner Rogers and Sutton's comments, seeing Chief Mike Carion's presentation and listening to the speakers who presented I believe we now have a much clearer picture of the incident that warranted the discussion of challenges surrounding the management of abandoned or injured wildlife.

CCWR has a good working relationship with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), their management staff and wardens. CDFW has gone out of their way to work with wildlife rehabilitators to ensure they are properly caring for the wildlife they are trained and licensed to handle. Wildlife rehabilitators who try to handle animals which they do not have the facilities to care for endanger themselves, the public and the life of the animal.

We understand and completely agree with Chief Mike Carion and CDFW's current policy on handling larger wildlife. The early months of 2014 have already produced five black bear yearlings found by members of the public in terrible condition, possibly drought-related. The one bear facility in California is already at capacity. The need for additional appropriate facilities is becoming more urgent. Until such time when more wildlife rehabilitators secure land, get training, licensing, permits and funding to build proper enclosures for large wildlife, we agree everything needs to be handled on a case by case basis.

Sincerely,

Leslie J. Bale

President

California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators