



## MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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March 20, 2015

Mr. Sonke Mastrup  
Executive Director  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: April 8, 2015 meeting agenda item – bobcat trapping regulations

Dear Mr. Mastrup:

The Mono Lake Committee (MLC) would like to provide comments on the proposed changes to bobcat trapping regulations; agenda item #29 slated for discussion at the April 8, 2015 meeting.

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizen's group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas. Supported by 16,000 members, the MLC has been active in the Mono Basin since 1978.

As an advocate for the Mono Basin watershed and surrounding lands, MLC urges the Commission to support the proposed ban on bobcat trapping in the Mono Basin.

The Mono Basin sits at the boundary of the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin and thus supports a wide range of habitats, plants, and animals. Mono Lake's tributary streams provide water and healthy riparian corridors used by wildlife—including top-level predators. Numerous protections—Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, and California State Water Board mandates exist to preserve the unique scenic, biological, and natural integrity of the Mono Basin.

In the past decade MLC has witnessed a decline in the number of bobcat sightings and evidence of activity in the Mono Basin. Additionally, the Mono Basin has had a reduction in the number of another top level species, mountain lion, in the effort to protect Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (a protected species). Continued reduction of large, predatory mammals could further upset the natural balance of wildlife in the Mono Basin.

MLC is concerned that bobcat population monitoring data is not current. This data was critical information for past distribution of trapping permits. It is difficult to see how the Commission could allow continued trapping without reinvigorating a significant bobcat population monitoring program to ensure that the population is not falling below healthy numbers.

The Mono Basin is well known as a largely undeveloped and wild landscape. Globally, statewide, and even within Mono County, the Mono Basin is heralded as a place where visitors can come to experience the increasingly rare sense of wild nature and a healthy ecosystem. In this era of fragmented landscapes and habitat disruption preserving safe zones for all creatures is all the more important.

Author Aldo Leopold, considered by many to be the father of wildlife management, wrote, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Bobcats, as top-level predators, are critical to a healthy, functioning Mono Basin ecosystem.

The California Fish and Game Commission was the first wildlife conservation agency established in the United States, balancing the often-perceived-as-conflicting goals of species protection and regulation of trapping. If the Commission does not adopt a statewide ban on bobcat trapping then we request that, at a minimum, you vote to support a regional bobcat trapping ban here in the Mono Basin watershed in order to provide a refuge area for bobcats and to preserve healthy population numbers.

Please contact me if need any additional information. Thank you for your time and attention to this very important issue.

Sincerely,



Lisa Cutting  
Eastern Sierra Policy Director