



January 29, 2019

Councilmember Smith
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

c/o: City Clerk
City Hall, Rm 395

Re: Proposed Revisions to the Protected Tree Ordinance

Dear Chairperson Harris-Dawson and Members of the Committee,

The Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) endorses the proposed revisions to the Protected Tree Ordinance to include two additional species of native plants: Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) with a minimum measurement of one stem of two or more inches in diameter, measured two and one-half feet above ground level.


These two species are long-lived, woody plants that have historic and cultural significance. They are signature species of the local ecosystem in the City of Los Angeles providing critical habitat for songbirds, bees and other pollinators and are important to maintaining biodiversity. They are deep-rooted and drought-adapted species, which provide slope stabilization, water infiltration and other environmental benefits. The Toyon is the City's official native plant and it is believed that Hollywood was named after this attractive plant with Holly-like leaves and bright clusters of red berries in winter.

Both species are important to maintaining biodiversity They are threatened by development and in need of protection. Both species provide important habitat for bees and other pollinators, which are attracted to the clusters of many, small cream-colored flowers in spring and summer. Songbirds feast on the Elderberry fruit in the fall and on Toyon berries in winter.

As housing needs increase, undeveloped land and reservoirs of native biodiversity are in danger of disappearing. By protecting these species from removal that is not necessary for reasonable development and, if removal is necessary, by requiring that replacements are planted on site, biodiversity and development will be able to co-exist.

We urge you to recommend to the City Council that the Protected Tree Ordinance be revised to include the Toyon and Elderberry. As stated, both species are critical sources of food and shelter for diverse species of pollinators and songbirds, are threatened by development, part of our natural heritage and in need of protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Thomas', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Aaron Thomas

Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee

Cc: Councilmember Cedillo
Councilmember Price
Councilmember Smith
Councilmember Blumenfield
Councilmember O'Farrell
Mayor Garcetti