

May 8, 2017

Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring St, Room 340  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Biodiversity Motion, Council File 15-0499

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

On behalf of the California Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, thank you for the opportunity to comment on City Council Biodiversity Motion (Council File 15-0499).

The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our on-the-ground work is carried out in all 50 states and in more than 70 countries and is supported by one million members. To date, we have helped conserve more than 120 million acres (including 1.2 million acres in California) and 5,000 river miles around the world. We have been engaged in the protection and management of natural resources across the U.S. for many years. The foundation of the Conservancy's work is our commitment to using the most up-to-date conservation science information and methodologies to guide decision-making. Our tools and methods have been widely adopted by other organizations and agencies that engage in natural resource conservation and ecosystem restoration.

The Conservancy commends the City Council for actively evaluating options for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the City of Los Angeles, located in a Mediterranean-climate region. Mediterranean-climate regions have high levels of species richness and endemism and are found in only five places on Earth. While Mediterranean-climate regions cover only 2.2 percent of Earth's land surface, they contain 20 percent of all known plant species. Unfortunately, Mediterranean ecosystems are also among the most threatened on Earth. More than 41 percent of the Mediterranean biome has been converted to farmland and urban uses, and only 5 percent of its natural area has been protected. In Greater Los Angeles, the valleys have been developed for residential, commercial and industrial use and many natural riparian corridors have been channelized. However, the Conservancy found in our 2013 Assessment of the region's biological diversity that important ecological values remain, as do opportunities for ecological restoration that will benefit nature and people. The Conservancy strongly supports projects that restore habitat to support biodiversity in this region.

The Conservancy has provided input to Councilmember Koretz's biodiversity working group since 2015 and has participated in the stakeholder process to raise the profile of biodiversity in Greater Los Angeles. The Conservancy strongly supports a program to protect, restore, and enhance biodiversity in Greater Los Angeles. The Conservancy has also contributed to the City of Los Angeles Sustainable City pLAn, championing a biodiversity strategy. The Biodiversity Motion recognizes the need for a City Biodiversity Index, and the

Conservancy strongly supports the implementation of this index in Los Angeles. To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity, it must be integrated across City departments, into strategies, and into practices as the Biodiversity Motion states. A technical advisory committee, community engagement, and outreach are also critical in gaining support for and implementing a strategy that protects and improves biodiversity across Los Angeles. The Conservancy would be pleased to lend technical assistance to this effort.

The Biodiversity Motion proposes the development of “habitat-based geospatial strategies for incorporating conservation and equity of biodiversity in specific plans, development permitting, connectivity, planning, urban forestry, and the design and maintenance of parks and streets.” To support the goals of the Biodiversity Motion, the Conservancy and our partners in the conservation community are working to develop a vision and plan for incorporating green infrastructure and nature into infrastructure projects and avoiding status quo gray infrastructure design, which includes our joint effort with the Natural History Museum called Biodiversity Analysis in Los Angeles (BAILA). BAILA is a spatially explicit science analysis that is flexible enough to allow for application of a variety of urban planning inputs (i.e. stormwater, transportation, energy, or land-use planning, public health or environmental justice planning). BAILA will include a spatially explicit, interactive map product and decision-making tool for a Greater Los Angeles gray-to-green conservation infrastructure vision and its associated financing and governance plans. The Conservancy is engaging a range of stakeholders in the production of these products and is sharing these with other stakeholders to build consensus for the vision with the support of a National Park Service RTCA Technical Assistance Grant.

In closing, the Conservancy strongly supports City Council’s Biodiversity Motion. We look forward to supporting the City of Los Angeles as planning and implementation continues. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. Please direct questions to Shona Ganguly, External Affairs Manager, at [sganguly@tnc.org](mailto:sganguly@tnc.org) or please call 213-787-9415.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Sourial".

Jill Sourial  
Urban Conservation Program Director  
The Nature Conservancy



05/9/17

Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Council-File 15-0499 (KORETZ) 'Protecting Biodiversity'

Dear Honorable Councilmembers,

On behalf of Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR), and the 40,000 supporters we represent, I write to express our strong support for the 'Protecting Biodiversity' motion moved by Councilmember Koretz. For over 30 years, FoLAR has worked to create an enduring vision for the LA River that focuses on her ecological health and the mutual social, economic, and public health benefits for the communities that neighbor her. This motion is a crucial step towards fulfilling the promise of a living, thriving river for all Angelenos.

We have a unique opportunity to demonstrate Los Angeles is a world-class city on the leading edge of promoting social equity through conversation and sustainable practices. FoLAR highly encourages the Council take into consideration the recent study *Developing Biodiversity Indicators for Los Angeles* (2016) and leverage its findings by UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability on behalf of the Natural History Museum, the National Park Service, and The Nature Conservancy. This would place City staff further ahead more quickly in developing biodiversity goals that reflect Los Angeles unique natural resources.

We offer our wholehearted support for the 'Protecting Biodiversity' motion by Councilmember Koretz. The River and FoLAR thank you for your leadership. If our organization can help in any way, please so not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Marissa Christiansen  
Executive Director



**MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
Ramirez Canyon Park  
5810 Ramirez Canyon Road  
Malibu, California 90265  
Phone (310) 589-3230 Fax (310) 589-3237

May 9, 2017

Los Angeles City Council  
Office of the City Clerk  
200 North Spring Street, Room 395  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**Protecting and Improving Biodiversity (Council File 15-0499)  
Item 25 on the May 10, 2017 Agenda**

Hon. Councilmembers:

The staff of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) enthusiastically supports the subject motion by Councilmember Koretz regarding the formation of a working group to develop strategies for protecting biodiversity in the City of Los Angeles, and the implementation of the City Biodiversity Index. The MRCA, in conjunction with our parent agency, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, owns or is responsible for the maintenance of over 69,000 acres of parkland and public open space in wild and urban-adjacent areas. Many of these acres fall within, or lie adjacent to, the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles. The subject motion aligns with the part of the MRCA's ongoing mission that includes protecting native species in perpetuity throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent areas.

The staff of the MRCA should be considered available to consult with the new biodiversity working group if desired by any of the participating agencies. Please feel free to contact me regarding this matter at 310-589-3230, ext. 124, by e-mail at [garrett.weinstein@mrca.ca.gov](mailto:garrett.weinstein@mrca.ca.gov). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Garrett Weinstein  
Project Analyst



5/9/2017

Los Angeles City Councilmembers

**RE: Keep Los Angeles Biodiverse – Support Biodiversity Draft Recommendations from Councilmember Koretz to Departments**

Dear City Council Members,

On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity's 1.3 million members and supporters, many of which live in the City of Los Angeles, we are writing to support Councilmember Koretz's Biodiversity Draft Recommendations and urge the City Council to adopt them and instruct the City departments, led by the Chief Legislative Analyst Department and the Bureau of Sanitation to implement them.

We believe increasing the focus on biodiversity within the City and its sphere of influence will provide great benefits to the resilience of our great City in protecting and enhancing local native wildlife, clean air, sustainable uses of water and other ecosystem services that result directly from an integrated community of natural biodiversity. It is a scientific fact that biodiverse ecosystems are more resilient to ecological changes than less diverse ecosystems. This resilience will become increasingly important as the effects of climate change affect our planet. California is one of 35 global biodiversity hotspots<sup>1</sup>, and southern California, including the City of Los Angeles, is rich in the sheer number of different plants, animals, and terrestrial and aquatic habitats present.

By adopting the goal of including biodiversity as a component of the City's operational paradigm, the City once again will lead the way – this time in bringing recognition to the benefits of conserving and promoting biodiversity. Through the City's implementation of these biodiversity recommendations, Los Angeles will continue to be a world-class sustainable and livable city that celebrates its unique and recognizable natural heritage.

We support the Biodiversity Draft Recommendations from Councilmember Koretz and ask that you do too.

Sincerely,

Ilene Anderson  
Staff Scientist  
Center for Biological Diversity

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cepf.net/resources/hotspots/North-and-Central-America/Pages/California-Floristic-Province.aspx>

# AHBE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

MAY 9, 2017

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL  
200 N. SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

re.: BIODIVERSITY MOTION (CF 15-0499)

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

AHBE Landscape Architects are committed to addressing the complex social and ecological problems of the Southern California region. Protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services in our urban environment is an urgent priority and why we strongly support the Biodiversity Motion CF 15-0499 introduced by Councilman Koretz.

We firmly believe that the health and wellbeing of all species are interrelated. The steps outlined in the Biodiversity Motion, to report on current strategies and recommend new strategies to protect and improve biodiversity in the City and region, and implement the City Biodiversity Index are critical first steps toward implementing policies to protect, manage, restore and enhance the unique biodiversity within the Los Angeles region.

As stewards of one of the world's biodiversity hot spots, we have a special responsibility in Los Angeles to provide leadership in environmental policy and social and environmental justice policies and practices. We urge you to vote in favor of the Biodiversity Motion as we work together transform the Los Angeles region to a more biodiverse place and one which connects all communities to the natural resources and beauty of the region.

Sincerely,



Calvin Abe, RLA, FASLA  
President



Gary Daley, ASLA  
Managing Principal



Gary Daley, RLA, LEED BD+C  
Senior Associate



Euan Mather, RLA, ASLA  
Principal



Jennifer Zell, RLA, ASLA  
Associate



**THEODORE PAYNE  
FOUNDATION  
for Wild Flowers &  
Native Plants, Inc.**

ESTABLISHED 1960

**GROUNDS**

Native Plant Nursery  
Seed and Book Store  
Demonstration Gardens  
Wild Flower Hill Trail  
Art Gallery  
Library and Archives

**PROGRAMS**

Classes and Workshops  
K-12 Field Trips & Outreach  
Seed Collection Program  
Volunteer Program  
Speakers Bureau

**EVENTS**

Native Plant Garden Tour  
Fall Plant Sale  
Poppy Day Plant Sale

May 9, 2017

Dear Los Angeles City Council Representatives,

I am writing in support of the Biodiversity Motion that is before the City Council. As one of Los Angeles' oldest environmental organizations, the Theodore Payne Foundation has been working to support local biodiversity through native plant horticulture since 1960 and we are delighted that the City is putting its weight behind this issue.

Although much of California is an internationally recognized biodiversity hotspot, with a significant reservoir of natural diversity that it threatened with destruction, in fact, we know little about the nature of Los Angeles. Through this motion, the City will express its will to adopt a standard for evaluating local biodiversity, establish a baseline of existing biodiversity, comparing our standing with other major cities around the world, and set goals for the future.

My hope is that through bringing attention to local biodiversity, the City Council will bring attention to the larger issue of how we want to live in Los Angeles. The drought has raised awareness that the landscaping choices we make impacts our water future. The Biodiversity Motion has the potential to raise awareness that we can also make choices that enrich our city with the plants and animals that make Los Angeles a singular place.

Thank you so much for supporting the Biodiversity Motion and for your commitment to making Los Angeles a better place for all its inhabitants.

Most Sincerely,

  
Kitty Connolly  
Executive Director



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area  
401 West Hillcrest Drive  
Thousand Oaks, California 91360-4207

Members of the City Council of Los Angeles,

May 9, 2017

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area strongly supports the initiative by the City of Los Angeles to better understand the status and distribution of biodiversity within the city. As the motion indicates, Southern California is one of the most diverse places in the world, but while we know this about the region generally, we know very little about the diversity of life within the city itself. More and more cities around the country and the world are taking an interest in the animals and plants that persist in them, realizing their intrinsic value and striving to both measure and foster this diversity. It is entirely appropriate that Los Angeles, the second largest metropolitan area in the country and one of just 31 megacities around the globe, do the same.

The National Park Service is mandated to strive to understand and protect the natural resources of the parks for the enjoyment of future generations. As the largest urban national park in the country and the only national park unit in the Los Angeles region, a primary goal of ours is to understand the ecology of urban areas generally and of the LA metropolitan area specifically. To this end, we invest a great deal of time and resources in the study of the fauna and flora of the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding areas, including in the City of Los Angeles itself. We welcome the efforts of others to gather information on other parts of the region and on other parts of the biota, and in particular on biodiversity in the most intensively urbanized areas of Los Angeles. In general very little is known about the wild plants and animals that live within the built environments of cities. But for thousands of urban residents, the biota in the city represent the best opportunity for contact and increased knowledge, which can both improve quality of life and develop a lifelong understanding and appreciation for nature.

We applaud and support the steps taken by this motion, specifically to move towards a better understanding of biodiversity across the city. Although the City Biodiversity Index, or Singapore Index, represents a good starting point, we agree that forming a Technical Advisory Committee to consider the best way forward for Los Angeles would be valuable. We would be happy to participate in this process in whatever ways the City deems appropriate. A primary objective of the park, as set forth in the enabling legislation in 1978, is to assist agencies of the State, cities, and counties, with furthering the goals of understanding and preserving natural resources. We feel strongly that providing whatever scientific expertise and knowledge we can to the region is an important role for the park and park staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for biodiversity in the Los Angeles area and for the city's efforts to measure and sustain it.

Sincerely,

For David Szymanski  
Superintendent