

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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**STATEMENT OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
REGARDING THE MOUNTAIN LION P-22 IN GRIFFITH PARK**

LOS ANGELES (March 11, 2016)—We are immensely proud of the mountain lions able to survive in the Santa Monica Mountains. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has worked for more than 30 years to preserve, protect and enhance the open spaces in the mountains within Los Angeles and Ventura County with a guiding principal of maintaining a network—however tenuous—of cross-freeway habitat linkages and wildlife corridors that keep the mountain ranges biologically inter-connected and provide enough habitat to support larger mammals. The existence of P-22 in the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains in Griffith Park since 2012 is a testament to the hard work of public agencies, including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the National Park Service, and California State Parks—among others—and the public investment in acquiring and protecting thousands of acres of local open space which supports more than 450 animal species.

Los Angeles is unique in that it is the only major metropolitan area in the country bisected by a mountain range. While it may seem frightening to think of mountain lions roaming so closely to an urban area—and recent surveillance video at the Los Angeles Zoo possibly linking a nighttime attack of a beloved koala to P-22—mountain lions stay away from people. It is important that those living near wild areas keep their pets and livestock in protected enclosures, and that all residents continue to live in concert with the spectacular wild places so close to them. P-22 is safest in the territory he knows as home. Scientists know that to relocate him to a more remote part of the mountains would likely have dire consequences for him—and possibly other mountain lions whose territory he would infringe upon—and would provide little public benefit.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was established by the State Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped to preserve over 73,000 acres of parkland in both wilderness and urban settings. Its mission is to strategically buy back, preserve, protect, restore and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California to form an interlinking system of urban, rural and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the public.

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