



Animal Protection of New Mexico

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GAME COMMISSION ENDORSES INCREASED TRAPPING, KILLING OF COUGARS AND BEARS DESPITE OVERWHELMING PUBLIC OUTCRY

SANTA FE—Today, the New Mexico Game Commission voted to endorse the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish's (NMDGF) extreme recommendations to drastically expand trapping, snaring, and killing across New Mexico as part of revisions to the 2016 Bear & Cougar Rule.

By a unanimous vote, the Game Commission endorsed the NMDGF proposals to a) allow cougar trapping using leg-hold traps and snares on state trust lands, totaling 9 million acres in New Mexico; b) remove the NMDGF permit requirement for landowners to use traps and snares on cougar, and; c) allow one person to kill up to four cougars in game species management zones where current cougar harvest levels are not being met. The Commission's approval of these recommendations comes despite NMDGF biologists publicly admitting in 2015 that they do not possess any new biological data on cougar populations and that the department cannot determine whether New Mexico's cougar habitat is below or at cougar carrying capacity. These new changes for management of cougars and black bears are expected to take effect in 2016 and, under current plans, will not be up for review again until 2019.

“Today, the Game Commission ignored public will, common sense, and good science by allowing for an increase in cruel trapping and killing of our cougars and increased killing of bears,” said Phil Carter, Wildlife Campaign Manager for Animal Protection of New Mexico (APNM). “We're astonished and dismayed Governor Martinez stayed silent about the cruel traps and snares that will soon dot the landscape of our state, capturing and killing not just cougars and bears, but many other animals. She chose to ignore the will of New Mexicans, making us the only state besides Texas where cougars will be

treated like varmints."

New polling shows that New Mexican voters oppose the original NMDGF Bear & Cougar Rule proposals by a three-to-one margin, and oppose by the same margin the practice of trapping and snaring on public lands.

Additionally, this week, APNM delivered nearly 6,000 petition signatures of individuals opposing NMDGF's proposals for the Bear & Cougar Rule to the Governor's Office and the Game Commissioners.

"Worse yet, the Department has not explained how it will prevent the cruel death of cougar kittens and nursing mothers who could be killed by indiscriminate trapping and snaring," said Carter. "Killing cougar mothers with nursing kittens is illegal and wrong."

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