



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
LOS ANGELES, RIVER CENTER & GARDENS
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December 2, 2020

Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

**Support for Amendment to Add Toyon and Mexican Elderberry
to Protected Tree Ordinance - CF 131339**

Honorable City Councilmembers:

Now is the time to add both Toyon and Mexican Elderberry to the native species in the City's protected tree ordinance. Both species are fundamental elements of the City's mixed northern chaparral ecosystems. Both species provide concentrated wildlife resources and contribute to watershed stability. The Covid pandemic continues to reinforce the importance of nature and its most prominent sized vegetation elements which includes these two species.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) agrees with the recommendation of the Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) and many other organizations regarding the new selected measurement standard for the two new species. That measurement standard of a 4-inch cumulative stem diameter measurement at 4 ½ feet high both creates a standard measurement for all the protected species and it will result in more toyon and Mexican elderberry trees/shrubs qualifying for protection. The MRCA supports that measurement standard.

Drought, brush clearance, fire and other disturbances often result in substantial damage to these species that then respond with rapid multi-trunk regrowth. Time does reduce the number of trunk stems. However, mature specimens with extensive root systems might not qualify if, at a moment in time after such a growth setback, they do not have a single 2-inch diameter stem at 4 ½ feet. In that case decades old trees might not qualify. The best remedy is a measurement standard of a 4-inch cumulative stem diameter measurement at 4 ½ feet high.

Sincerely,

George Lange
Chairperson