

High Desert Corridor
Joint Powers Authority

July 6, 2020

Meeting Materials

Item 8

Approve Sending Letter Opposing Western
Joshua Tree Listing



High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority



E-220 HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR

Date: July 6, 2020

Subject: Potential listing of the western Joshua tree as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

Recommended Action: Receive information and provide direction to staff on the potential listing of the western Joshua tree as a threatened species under CESA.

Background: On October 21, 2019, the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGC) received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity to list western Joshua tree as a threatened species under CESA. Subsequently, CFGC referred the petition for evaluation to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). In February, 2020, DFW submitted its evaluation to the CFGC indicating the petition contains sufficient information to indicate that the petition action may be warranted. Should CFGC accept the petition and determine the western Joshua tree is a candidate for protection, it would enter into a study period in which the western Joshua tree would be afforded all the protections of a threatened species. At the June 24-25, 2020 CFGC meeting, staff recommended the item be continued to the August 19-20, 2020 meeting based on conversation with the petitioner and other stakeholders.

A number of organizations, including the County of San Bernardino, have submitted comments to CFGC opposing the petition to list the Western Joshua tree as a threatened species under CESA due to the potential impacts to public infrastructure projects.

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