



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 12/13/11

December 6, 2011

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: PROPOSED BAN ON THE IMPORTATION AND
SALE OF BULLFROGS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Dear Members of the Board:

According to SAVE THE FROGS!, a public charity dedicated exclusively to amphibian conservation, hundreds of millions of animals are shipped around the world each year for use as pets, food, bait, and lab research, as well as for use in zoos. Many of these animals are purposely set free in their new environment and then adapt to their new environments where they reproduce and become established. Among these are bullfrogs.

While bullfrogs are native to eastern North America, they have been transported around the world for use as food and have now become established in at least 15 countries, as well as throughout western North America. Being a large amphibian, they compete with native amphibians for food resources and also eat smaller amphibians and juvenile coho salmon.

California is home to 16 threatened amphibian species. In Santa Cruz County, endangered California Red-Legged Frogs live in Antonelli Pond, an urban pond that sees high recreational use. Unfortunately, the long-term future of this population of endangered frogs is not secure due in part to the presence of predatory non-native fish and frogs at the site. SAVE THE FROGS! has worked with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County this past year to restore habitat at Antonelli Pond and increase the number of California Red-Legged Frogs at the pond. This work involved removing non-native frogs and weeds, planting native vegetation at the pond, creating signs to educate the pond's visitors about the plight of amphibians and ways they can assist amphibian conservation efforts, and creation of a short film to document these efforts.

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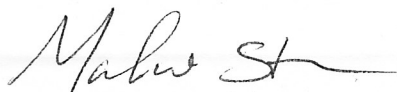
Bullfrogs predate upon native species, out-compete native species for food resources, and spread infectious diseases to native populations. Invasive species are one of the most serious threats to native wildlife worldwide. Once they become established, they are incredibly difficult to eradicate. In addition to driving native species to dangerously low numbers or to complete extinction, invasive species cost humans billions of dollars each year in environmental damage.

The County's Fish and Game Advisory Commission is requesting that the Board take action to impose a ban on the sale, possession, importation, and release of American Bullfrogs (see attached) as both an on-the-ground attempt to start limiting the presence of bullfrogs and as a vehicle for improving awareness of this problem and the importance of native amphibian conservation in general. The Commission is also requesting that the Board contact John Laird, California's Secretary for Natural Resources, to urge that similar action be taken at the State level.

Accordingly, I recommend that the Board take the following actions:

1. Direct County Counsel to return to the Board on February 28, 2012, with recommendations for the Board's consideration to enact a ban on the sale, possession, importation, and release of American bullfrogs in Santa Cruz County.
2. Direct the Chairperson to write to the California Secretary for Natural Resources to urge that action be taken at the State level to ban the sale, possession, importation, and release of American bullfrogs in California.

Sincerely,



MARK W. STONE, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

MWS:ted
Attachments

cc: Fish and Game Advisory Commission
County Counsel
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
SAVE THE FROGS!

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