

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 06/20/2013
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: AB 1213
AUTHOR: Bloom, Richard

BILL SUMMARY: The Bobcat Protection Act of 2013.

This bill creates the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013 within the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Specifically, this bill does the following:

- Beginning January 1, 2014, makes it unlawful to trap bobcat in the area surrounding Joshua Tree National Park, as specified.
After January 1, 2014, requires the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to amend its regulations to prohibit the trapping of bobcats adjacent to the boundaries of each national or state park and national monument or wildlife refuge in which bobcat trapping is currently prohibited, and within or adjacent to any other public or private conservation areas identified by the Commission for protection. This bill further requires the Commission to delineate the areas where bobcat trapping is prohibited using easily identifiable markers.
Stipulates that the Commission shall set trapping license fees commencing in the 2014-15 season at a level necessary to fully recover all reasonable administrative and implementation costs associated with this bill.

FISCAL SUMMARY

DFW estimates that this bill will cost approximately \$605,000 and 2.5 positions in the first year of implementation, and \$342,000 ongoing to develop the regulations and to enforce no trapping zones as required by this bill. While the bill provides that the Commission shall set license fees to a level necessary to recover all reasonable administrative costs, the fees would have to be tripled in order to do so.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance (Finance) is opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

- This bill is unnecessary. DFW indicates that there is no imminent threat to California's bobcat population, which is estimated at approximately 70,000. While the rise in demand for bobcat pelts has resulted in an increase in the number of bobcats taken for commercial purposes in the past few years, DFW notes that the increase has not been substantial, and that the current annual bobcat harvest level of approximately 2,000 is well below the 14,400 allowable under current state management guidelines set forth by DFW and the Commission.
This bill will result in potentially significant additional workload for DFW. At a minimum, the bill requires 0.5 Environmental Scientist to identify numerous protection zones surrounding each state and national park, each national monument or wildlife refuge, any public or private conservation areas identified throughout the state, and to develop a corresponding regulatory package to further define and enforce those no-trapping zones. In addition, the bill requires 2.0 Fish and Game Wardens to conduct field surveillance of trap lines to determine if bobcats are unlawfully trapped or are used for commercial

Analyst/Principal (0634) K.Gmeinder Date Program Budget Manager Karen Finn Date
Department Deputy Director Date
Governor's Office: By: Date: Position Approved Position Disapproved
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Bloom, Richard

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COMMENTS (continued)

purposes. We note that these time-consuming and costly efforts appear to be unnecessary to protect a species that is not threatened, in areas of the state that currently provide significant refuge.

- This bill would result in significant enforcement challenges. According to DFW, no-trapping buffers would be extremely difficult to enforce as trappers would still be allowed to trap in these areas for other fur-bearers such as coyote or gray fox. As a result, wildlife officers would have to conduct investigations to determine if the trapper was trapping and keeping bobcats instead of a legal species. Considering the vast and remote geographic area that would require surveillance, DFW would likely be unable to fully enforce the provisions of the bill.
- This bill allows the Commission to set trapping license fees for the 2014-15 season and all subsequent seasons, at a level necessary to recover reasonable costs associated with the regulation of trapping bobcats. According to DFW, a trapping license costs \$115.50 annually, and total trapping fees generate less than \$100,000 in revenues annually. These fees would need to be more than tripled in order to recover the minimal costs associated with this bill. These significantly increased fees would likely have a negative impact on lawful bobcat trappers and hunters.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)					Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)					
	CO	PROP					
	RV	98	FC	2013-2014 FC	2014-2015 FC	2015-2016 Code	
3600/Fish & Wild	SO	No	C	303 C	474 C	342 0200	
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>						
0200	Fish and Game Preservation Fund						