



Antelope Valley Conservancy
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June 11, 2020

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
via electronic communication to fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Dear President Sklar and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comment regarding the Mojave Desert's iconic western Joshua tree. As a conservancy founded in the Mojave Desert in 2005 and authorized by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to hold conservation lands, Antelope Valley Conservancy writes to you in **strong support** of the petition submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity, requesting the formal listing of the western Joshua tree (*yucca brevifolia*) as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act..

As desert stewards and Antelope Valley residents, the board members of the Antelope Valley Conservancy recognize the value and uniqueness of Joshua tree habitats and the importance of protecting them for future generations. Joshua tree woodlands face an uncertain future, threatened by invasive species, drought, wildfires, grazing, off-roading, and development. Climate change may leave Joshua Tree National Park without its namesake Joshua trees by the end of the century. With approximately 40% of the western Joshua tree's range on private land, projections indicate all of this habitat could be lost in the coming years without CESA protection.

Clearly, the Mojave Desert's iconic western Joshua trees need protection.

We request your support for the designation of western Joshua trees as a formal candidate for protection under CESA.

Thank you for your consideration,

Antelope Valley Conservancy

By Christina Andrews
Corporate Secretary