



CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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Lawsuit Challenges Wildlife-killing Development in Fire-prone Part of L.A. County

Northlake Would Endanger Residents, Harm Local Mountain Lions

LOS ANGELES— Conservation organizations [sued](#) the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors today for approving the 1,300-acre Northlake housing development, which would pave over a pristine stream, degrade wildlife connectivity for local mountain lions and put people at risk of wildfires.

Today's suit, filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court, notes that the project area is designated by CalFire as a "very high fire hazard severity zone," meaning there's a high risk of wildfires. The county's approval of Northlake comes after county supervisors adopted a resolution in December 2018 acknowledging a "[new era of threat from wildfires](#)" driven in part by residential development in highly fire-prone areas.

"The horror and heartbreak of California's last fire season showed why Northlake shouldn't be built in this highly flammable area," said J.P. Rose, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. "County supervisors shouldn't have approved this large-scale development in this fire-prone place. Sprawl projects like this one lead to lost lives, scorched homes and escalating firefighting costs, and they're terrible for wildlife."

The development — originally proposed in 1992 — would bury more than 3.5 miles of Grasshopper Creek, a pristine stream that feeds into Southern California's last free-flowing river, the Santa Clara. The project would also likely eliminate one of the region's last surviving populations of imperiled western spadefoot toads. And it would degrade a wildlife corridor needed by local mountain lions to move between the Angeles and Los Padres national forests.

"The project will pave over pristine streams and evict rare wildlife while adding more long-distance commuters and high greenhouse gas emissions," said Dan Silver, executive director of the Endangered Habitats League. "This dinosaur of a development will undermine state climate goals, add to the region's traffic burden, and exacerbate the jobs and housing imbalance in the Santa Clarita Valley."

In a letter objecting to the development, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy noted there are tens of thousands of approved but unbuilt housing units in the Santa Clarita Valley. The Conservancy concluded that Northlake is "entirely antithetical to modern planning thought, the public good, and to science."

Northlake is backed by Michael Rosenfeld, of Woodridge Capital Partners. County supervisors Katherine Barger, Janice Hahn, Hilda Solis and Mark Ridley-Thomas voted to issue final approvals on April 2, 2019.

The conservation organizations raised their concerns in comment letters and public hearings with the county. The county's approval of the project violates the California Environmental Quality Act, which requires that when environmental impacts are significant, the approving agency must adopt all feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce those impacts.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Endangered Habitats League is a Southern California conservation organization dedicated to ecosystem protection and sustainable land use for the benefit of all the region's inhabitants.

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