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December 14, 2023

Dr. Lauren Dennhardt, Sr. Director of Conservation  
Catalina Island Conservancy  
P.O. Box 2739, Avalon, CA 90704

Dear Dr. Dennhardt,

I am writing on behalf of the California Invasive Plant Council. Our organization is dedicated to protecting California's environment and economy from invasive plants by supporting the community of land stewards across the state. Though we focus on invasive plants, we are well aware of the damage caused by invasive animals, from shot hole borers killing trees in southern California to South American nutria damaging vegetation in San Joaquin Valley waterways.

The rationale for removing imported mule deer from Catalina Island to protect endemic plants and wildlife has been clearly described by the Catalina Island Conservancy and is well supported by studies of the impacts of introduced grazers on islands. The conservancy has evaluated a wide range of alternatives and selected the one deemed to be the most effective and humane. We agree with the rationale for removing mule deer on the island shared by other environmental groups such as The Nature Conservancy, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the California Native Plant Society.

We also understand and empathize with the deep concern community members have about killing the mule deer, a beloved feature of their local environment. This is one of the many difficult aspects of our modern ecological reality. Having moved organisms around the globe over the last several centuries we are faced with situations where these introductions have resulted in significant ecological harm. We must either address the causes or live with the consequences. In a situation like the one on Catalina Island, we believe that the importance of protecting the survival of species that have evolved over millions of years who are faced with extinction is the greater need, difficult as it is for those of our current generations with a strong personal connection to the deer.

We acknowledge the passion and dedication of all stakeholders involved in this decision, and hope that the community will come to peace with the hard choices needed to ensure the survival of the island's unique biological diversity for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Doug Johnson'.

Doug Johnson  
Executive Director