

Fish and Game commissioner may be removed from post

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Six months after one of California's top wildlife officials faced a fury after shooting a mountain lion in Idaho, fellow commissioners are expected Wednesday to remove Dan Richards as president of the state Fish and Game Commission.

But the unabashed hunting enthusiast isn't going down without a fight.

"This originates from the enviro-terrorists being threatened by me," Richards said in one of his first interviews since his mountain lion hunt enraged environmentalists.

"They see a guy who is paying attention to the issues, and who calls them out on the crap they throw out. Their involvement is important but by and large it's a farce, and I'm not afraid to call it that."

The state Fish and Game Commission will vote on "election of new officers" at its meeting in Ventura, a vote that is expected to dethrone Richards, a San Bernardino County real estate developer and big-game hunter, but leave him as a member of the commission.

"The president of the commission should be someone who has the confidence of a majority of his peers," said Mike Sutton, vice president of the commission, and executive director of Audubon California.

Richards said he plans to attend the meeting. If he is replaced as president — a role that allows him to set the agenda, speak for the commission and run its meetings — he said he will remain on the commission until his term expires

in January.

The powerful five-member commission sets rules for fishing, hunting and endangered species in California.

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