

March 29, 2023

Colorado General Assembly
Senate Agriculture & Natural Resource
Committee
200 E Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Executive Director Dan Gibbs
1313 Sherman St.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Chairman Roberts and Members of the Colorado Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you on behalf of tens-of-thousands of Colorado hunters, anglers, conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts. We do so to respectfully express our support for SB23-255, Wolf Depredation Compensation Fund.

With the passage of Proposition 114 in November of 2020, Colorado voters directed the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission to develop a plan to reintroduce and manage gray wolves in Colorado no later than December 31, 2023 on designated lands west of the Continental Divide. Proposition 114 further directed Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to hold statewide hearings to solicit public input in the development of the state's Wolf Restoration and Management Plan and allocate state funds to assist livestock owners in preventing conflicts with gray wolves and to pay fair compensation for livestock losses.

The reintroduction of gray wolves into Colorado will result in occasional wolf depredation to domestic livestock and working animals. It is both necessary and appropriate that the state make available funds to compensate Colorado's livestock owners for agricultural production losses resulting from the reintroduction of gray wolves.

Colorado's neighboring states in the Rocky Mountain West who host long-term populations of well-established gray wolves have adopted various iterations of wolf depredation compensation funds. The compensation account established by SB23-255 was modeled after those programs while taking into consideration the current draft of CPW's Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. By doing so, SB23-255 is well poised to provide sufficient funding to offset the costs incurred by Colorado's agricultural producers related to gray wolves.

Moreover, Colorado's agricultural producers and private landowners play a significant role in supporting much of the state's current wildlife populations by maintaining and managing open, connected landscapes. From providing critical wintering grounds to important summer range for a variety of species, private lands provide invaluable wildlife habitat and resources across the state. As such, CPW works closely with Colorado's private landowners and agricultural producers, a relationship that is of great importance for all of Colorado's wildlife now and into the future.

With Proposition 114 passing by less than 1% of the votes, rural Colorado was not in support of gray wolf reintroduction. The passage of SB23-255 would take a significant step in rebuilding trust within the agricultural community by acknowledging that their concerns are valid and

warrant substantive accommodation. Such efforts will be imperative for increasing Colorado's cultural carrying capacity of gray wolves on designated lands west of the Continental Divide, the majority of which are rural in nature.

For the reasons stated above, we encourage a "YES" vote on SB23-255.

Sincerely,
Members of the Colorado Wildlife Conservation Project

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Safari Club International
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Coloradans For Responsible Wildlife Management
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Colorado Outfitters Association
Colorado Bowhunters Association
Colorado Conservation Alliance
Muley Fanatic Foundation
Colorado State Muzzle Loading Association