

February 25, 2024

Objections to the Appointments to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Dear Senators,

We, the undersigned organizations, represent a wide range of stakeholders dedicated to the responsible management of Colorado's valued natural resources and are writing to voice our strong opposition to the nominees for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission (CPW). Our expertise encompasses areas such as economic development, outdoor recreation, agriculture, wildlife management and wildlife habitat conservation, and community well-being. At the heart of our objection is the lack of qualifications of the proposed appointees for the roles they are being nominated for, their apparent biases, and our broader concerns regarding governance, transparency, and the future path of the CPW.

The symbiotic relationship between Colorado's economy and the stewardship of public and private lands and wildlife is profound. Outdoor recreation, hunting, angling, and agriculture are economic lifelines that significantly contribute to our state's prosperity, both socially and financially. These sectors support tens-of-thousands of jobs and sustain both rural and urban communities, illustrating the vital connection between the health of our public lands and wildlife as well as our collective social and economic well-being.

Partnerships with CPW and local agricultural communities are a testament to the importance of maintaining the delicate equilibrium between economic growth and environmental conservation. These collaborations are essential for preserving science based wildlife management, outdoor recreation opportunities and our agricultural heritage. It is through this perspective that we emphasize the critical role of the CPW Commission in securing a sustainable future for Colorado.

CPW Commissioners are trustees of our shared natural resources and must have a deep understanding and broad experience managing the complex interactions between wildlife, land use, recreation, and conservation. Their decisions have far-reaching implications for the livelihoods of Coloradans, the health of our wildlife and the promotion of outdoor recreation. As such, our expectation is that in addition to being ambassadors of CPW for the state that they also adequately represent the constituencies for which they were appointed.

Our objections to the current nominees for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission (CPW) arise from a critical examination of their collective qualifications and perceived biases, which may hinder their ability to effectively fulfill the Commission's diverse responsibilities and serve as equitable trustees of CPW. The underlying issue is not just the individual backgrounds of these nominees, which, while impressive in certain areas, lack the comprehensive experience necessary for appropriate management of parks, wildlife, and outdoor recreation. The nominees' lack of broad recreational management experience, demonstrated objections towards holistic science-based wildlife management and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and limited engagement and experience with the relationship between private land management, are of significant concern.

These concerns reflect a broader concern about the Commission's future direction, governance, and transparency. The CPW Commission needs to be a balanced entity with individuals who possess a comprehensive understanding of the intricate balance between conservation, recreation, economic impact, and community needs in Colorado. Moreover, the CPW Commission's effectiveness hinges on its ability to represent and integrate the diverse interests

and expertise of Colorado's communities and stakeholders. A balanced commission not only enriches decision-making processes but also ensures that CPW's actions are equitable, sustainable, and supported by the public. Such a holistic approach is indispensable for the conservation and enjoyment of Colorado's natural resources now and into the future.

Managing Colorado's natural resources depends upon commissioners who bring a wide range of experiences and a profound commitment to sustainable management practices that serve the interests of all Coloradans. It is crucial that the nominees demonstrate a harmonious blend of conservation ethics, economic insight, and respect for the traditions and livelihoods integral to our state's identity.

In conclusion, we urge members of the Colorado Senate to reject the three nominees for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission due to concerns about their qualifications, backgrounds, potential biases, and underlying concern regarding the public's trust in CPW's ability to manage our shared our public resources in a manner that will provide the same opportunities we have today for future generations.

Sincerely,

