

# **Biodiversity Protection and Climate Resilience Act of 2022**

## **What Problem Does the Bill Solve?**

CPW is on the front lines of the biodiversity and climate crisis and deserves our support. In the past, CPW has made decisions about Colorado's wildlife based on funding provided, in large part by hunting and angling license fees. Today, CO has over 360 at-risk species. This bill provides the CPW commission and leadership with the best available information from the science disciplines that are most essential to protecting CO's biodiversity and climate resilience. This will enable CPW to make better informed decisions to ensure they prioritize native biodiversity restoration and protection, ecosystem health and climate resilience from leading, independent, peer reviewed science. The health of CO's biodiversity is directly linked to the health of all of us.

## **What is Climate Resilience?**

Climate resilience is the ability of a species or an ecosystem to maintain itself in a healthy state in the face of climate change, including droughts, floods, and wildfires. Resilience is achieved by restoring natural levels of biodiversity (the variety, abundance and distribution of populations and communities of native species) and protecting the habitats upon which they depend. Clear air, clean and abundance water, our food, and our health depend on Mother Nature's resilience to a warming climate. We must restore Mother Nature's climate resilience by protecting native biodiversity right now, before it's too late.

## **How Does the Bill Work?**

Establishes a Science Advisory Committee:

- The Science Advisory Committee will consist of scientists with expertise in both carefully selected western sciences as well as Traditional Ecological Knowledge keepers representing the original indigenous tribes of CO – this follows the direction of the USFWS, National Park Service, the EPA, as well as the USGS. These scientists will be nominated by a reputable scientific body & chosen by the head of DNR. We hope that two current CPW scientists are able to join the Science Advisory Committee.
- Their 3 responsibilities are:
  1. Develop a long-term strategic plan for the protection of CO's biodiversity, to be approved by the head of DNR
  2. Develop an annual plan for the implementation of CO's SWAP
  3. Develop an educational program on their findings to be offered to CPW staff and commissioners
- Their term is anticipated to be up to 10 years, so they can update the strategy and the annual SWAP implementation plan as new scientific information becomes available.

## **Do other Agencies Convene Science Advisory Committees?**

Yes. Federal agencies routinely convene science advisory committees, including the EPA, the FDA, and the Interior Department.

## **Can't We Solve this Problem by Giving CPW More Money to Manage Wildlife?**

No. As a result of our support for the Keep CO Wild Annual Pass Bill, starting in 2023 when the pass is issued, CPW will be receiving \$45M-\$50M annually from all Coloradans as we register our vehicles, not just those interested in hunting and fishing. An independent science advisory council is needed to help CPW understand the best science on protecting our biodiversity, which more fully represents the needs of all our residents.

***Can't We Solve the Problem by Simply Having CPW Hire More Scientists?***

No. CPW has a team of good scientists doing good work and who care about their work. Although CPW says it has 250 biologists, over half are in charge of law enforcement in our parks. Only a small number do actual research on native species and are not experts in all the science fields required for an effective biodiversity protection strategy. We hope that the CPW scientists look forward from learning from the Science Advisory Committee and embrace the new ways of protecting our biodiversity and restoring our climate resiliency.

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