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Initiative 2019-2020 #79: Restoration of Gray Wolves

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Colorado, Colorado Secretary of State

Received
Legislative Council Staff
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SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 33-2-105.8 as follows:

33-2-105.8. Reintroduction of gray wolves on public lands; public input in commission development of science-based plan; compensation to owners of livestock.

(1) THE VOTERS OF COLORADO FIND AND DECLARE:

- (a) HISTORICALLY, WOLVES WERE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE WILD HABITAT OF COLORADO BUT WERE EXTERMINATED AND HAVE BEEN FUNCTIONALLY EXTINCT FOR SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE STATE;
- (b) THE GRAY WOLF IS LISTED AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES ON THE COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S LIST OF THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES;
- (c) ONCE RESTORED TO COLORADO, GRAY WOLVES WILL HELP RESTORE A CRITICAL BALANCE IN NATURE; AND
- (d) RESTORATION OF THE GRAY WOLF TO THE STATE MUST BE DESIGNED TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS WITH PERSONS ENGAGED IN RANCHING AND FARMING IN THIS STATE.

(2) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY PROVISION OF STATE LAW TO THE CONTRARY, INCLUDING SECTION 33-2-105.5(2), AND IN ORDER TO RESTORE GRAY WOLVES TO THE STATE, THE COMMISSION SHALL:

- (a) DEVELOP A SCIENCE-BASED PLAN TO RESTORE AND MANAGE GRAY WOLVES IN COLORADO;
- (b) HOLD STATEWIDE HEARINGS TO ACQUIRE INFORMATION TO BE CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING SUCH PLAN;
- (c) PERIODICALLY OBTAIN PUBLIC INPUT TO UPDATE SUCH PLAN;
- (d) TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO BEGIN REINTRODUCTION OF GRAY WOLVES BY DECEMBER 31, 2023 ON PUBLIC LANDS IN COLORADO THAT ARE WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE; AND
- (f) OVERSEE GRAY WOLF RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE FUNDS THAT ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO:

- (I) ASSIST OWNERS OF LIVESTOCK IN PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN GRAY WOLVES AND LIVESTOCK; AND
- (II) PAY FAIR COMPENSATION TO OWNERS OF LIVESTOCK FOR ANY LOSSES OF LIVESTOCK CAUSED BY GRAY WOLVES, AS VERIFIED BY THE DIVISION.

(3) THE COMMISSION'S SCIENCE-BASED PLAN SHALL COMPLY WITH SUBSECTIONS 33-2-105.7(2), (3), AND (4) AND SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO:

- (a) THE SELECTION OF DONOR POPULATIONS OF GRAY WOLVES;
- (b) THE PLACES, MANNER, AND SCHEDULING OF REINTRODUCTIONS OF GRAY WOLVES BY THE DIVISION, WITH SUCH REINTRODUCTIONS BEING RESTRICTED TO PUBLIC LANDS WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE;

(c) DETAILS FOR THE RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF GRAY WOLVES, INCLUDING ACTIONS NECESSARY OR BENEFICIAL FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SELF-SUSTAINING POPULATION, AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 33-2-104;

(d) ASSURANCE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS THAT THE COMMISSION WILL NOT IMPOSE LAND, WATER, OR RESOURCE USE RESTRICTIONS IN FURTHERANCE OF THE PLAN; AND

(e) METHODOLOGIES FOR DETERMINING WHEN THE GRAY WOLF POPULATION IS SUSTAINING ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY AND WHEN TO REMOVE THE GRAY WOLF FROM THE LIST OF THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES, AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 33-2-105(2).

(4) IN FURTHERANCE OF THIS SECTION AND THE EXPRESSED INTENT OF VOTERS, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

(a) SHALL MAKE SUCH APPROPRIATIONS AS ARE NECESSARY TO FUND THE PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED AND OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED BY THIS SECTION; AND

(b) MAY ADOPT SUCH OTHER LEGISLATION AS WILL FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESTORATION OF GRAY WOLVES TO COLORADO.

(5) AS USED IN THIS SECTION:

(a) "GRAY WOLF" MEANS NONGAME WILDLIFE OF THE SPECIES *CANIS LUPUS*;

(b) "PUBLIC LANDS" MEANS THOSE LANDS IN COLORADO THAT ARE SUBJECT TO THE PUBLIC LAND LAWS OF COLORADO OR OF THE UNITED STATES; AND

(c) "RESTORE" OR "RESTORATION" MEANS REINTRODUCTION, AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 33-2-105.7(1)(a), AS WELL AS POST-RELEASE MANAGEMENT OF THE GRAY WOLF IN A MANNER THAT FOSTERS THE SPECIES' CAPACITY TO SUSTAIN ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY.

SECTION 2. Effective date. THIS SECTION TAKES EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 2021.