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A ballot measure to halt Colorado's wolf reintroduction by 2026 hits next stage

Initiative forges ahead despite a group of northwest Colorado stakeholders asking the citizen group to suspend its campaign

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Two years into Colorado's voter-initiated wolf reintroduction, another citizen group is pushing for changes to the state law via ballot. However, several groups and counties in northwest Colorado have concerns.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife/Courtesy Photo

A citizen initiative striving to put wolves back on the ballot in Colorado has cleared the next hurdle.

On Friday, March 21, Colorado Advocates for Smart Wolf Policy filed the final ballot language for a measure to end the reintroduction of wolves by 2026. The initiative will now begin the process of finalizing the ballot title before it begins collecting signatures.

To get on the November 2026 ballot, the initiative will need to obtain 124,238 valid signatures.

In the final language submitted to the secretary of state, the ballot measure proposes changes to the state law created with Proposition 114 — the 2020 ballot initiative that kicked off Colorado's reintroduction of wolves.

The measure proposes to:

- End the state's reintroduction of gray wolves by Dec. 31, 2026
- Remove the classification of gray wolves as "non-game" wildlife
- Include livestock guard and herding animals in depredation compensation programs
- Prohibit the importation of gray wolves into the state

This represents a shift from the proposal's [original proposal in January](#), which sought to repeal the language from Proposition 114 entirely. The modification came following stakeholder engagement with ranching and farming industry stakeholders, who expressed concerns that repealing it entirely would lead to the loss of reimbursement for livestock losses, according to Stan VanderWerf, one of the designated representatives for the ballot measure.

As the ballot initiative progresses through the [state process](#), it has come [under fire by a coalition of northwest Colorado governments, agriculture and sporting groups](#). The coalition sent a letter this week to Colorado Advocates for Smart Wolf Policy asking it to suspend its ballot effort.

The letter expressed concerns that the initiative failed to get input from the stakeholders most affected by Colorado's wolf reintroduction and could stymie current efforts to make improvements on-the-ground.

“Any effort — whether administratively through the (Colorado Parks and Wildlife) Commission, legislatively, or by ballot — must ensure collaboration with those impacted,” said Lauren Dobson, a representative for the coalition. “While we welcome them to join our coalition conversations, we request that they pause their work and allow the conservation and agricultural communities to lead any strategy.”



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