

RESOLUTION 56-2020

WHEREAS, Washington County, State of Colorado is a legal and political subdivision of the State of Colorado for which the Board of County Commissioners is authorized to act in the interest of health, safety and welfare of its citizens and environment; and

WHEREAS, the livestock industry and big game hunting are two of the primary components of the Colorado economy, and are a major contributor to the economic and social wellbeing of Washington County; and

WHEREAS, pronghorn have declined significantly and deer populations fluctuate in Washington County; and

WHEREAS, wolf populations are known to increase rapidly, and would expectedly make their way to the county within a few years; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission has determined that deer and elk herds in southern Colorado are having less young, poor fawn/ calf survival rates, and many of the herds are well below population objectives and would suffer further decline due to the additive mortality from wolf predation; and

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing recreation is a \$1.8 billion dollar industry and supports 21,000 jobs in Colorado, and additive mortality from wolf predation would reduce hunting license numbers and reduce recreational opportunity and income in the State; and

WHEREAS, Federal and State listings of the gray wolf as an endangered species preclude wolf population control or the lethal control of depredating individuals; and

WHEREAS, current wolf populations in other states kill several hundred livestock each year and are expected to do the same in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, there is no fund or mechanism established to compensate ranchers or farmers for such losses in the State; and

WHEREAS, game damage compensation funds have historically been established through sportsmen license fees, and it is unfair to reduce hunting opportunities yet pay predation payments from funds paid by sportsmen; and

WHEREAS, there would be increased, unfunded, staffing, resource, and monetary requirements to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, which is already financially constrained, to implement a wolf reintroduction program, which would have to include monitoring wolf populations; monitoring ungulate population responses; monitoring disease changes; investigating wolf predation claims; assisting landowners and ranchers

on wolf predation counter-measures and prevention techniques; public relations; and working through changes to wildlife management plans, population modeling including wolves, and resetting hunting license numbers; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the negative economic impacts of wolf introduction, wolves pose a danger to the physical health of household pets and people due to predation and the transmission of diseases and parasites; and

WHEREAS, ongoing private efforts to reintroduce wolves into Colorado are unnecessary based upon scientific input from the federal and state agencies tasked with managing wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS, the efforts to reintroduce the gray wolf to the northern Rocky Mountains have exceeded recovery goals, Colorado is not part of the historic range of the Mexican wolf, and existing federal wolf recovery efforts do not include establishing populations of either the gray wolf or the Mexican wolf in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission passed Resolution 16-01 opposing the intentional release of any wolves into Colorado,

Now Therefore be it Resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Colorado as follows:

1. The Board opposes any efforts to introduce or expand the population of wolves into Colorado.
2. The Board supports recommendations of the Colorado Wolf Working Group, which were adopted by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in 2005 for managing wolves that migrate into Colorado.
3. The Board also encourages specific implementation criteria be amended to the Colorado Wolf Management Working Group Recommendation for Migrating Wolves, in addition to planning for resident wolves in Colorado. This planning process should include diverse stakeholders, including local governments. Issues that need to be addressed are: impacts to local economies, ungulate herds, threatened or endangered/ rare species (i.e. sage grouse), livestock, hunting, recreation, and disease management.
4. The Board supports the position taken by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife in its' resolution 16-1.
5. The Board requests that any federal or state wolf management plans include funding to offset the negative impacts of wolves on livestock, wildlife management, hunting, and other adversely affected sections of local economies impacted by wolf presence.

6. The Board supports efforts to include a requirement that any publicly funded or sponsored wolf education programs include comprehensive and balanced discussions about the impacts of wolves on local economies, and include the perspective of livestock producers, hunters, and public health officials. The Board also supports regular educational opportunities to the public regarding rules, regulations, and endangered species act implications for wolf management. Educational opportunities at a minimum should include livestock and wildlife resource protection options.

This Resolution was presented at the meeting held on the 18th day of February, 2020 by Commissioner Laybourn who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Willeke and on roll call vote, all votes being yes, the resolution was adopted.

Attest:

Annie Kent

Tom N. Wells
Chairman

Richard T. Willeke
Commissioner

Sean Laybourn
Commissioner

