

March 24, 2022

TO: Governor Jared Polis

RE: Colorado's Leadership in Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful

The undersigned Colorado local elected officials write today regarding our vision for a climate resilient Colorado and express our support for a statewide conservation goal in step with President Biden's national Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful conservation plan. That plan includes a commitment to conserving and restoring 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030 to combat climate change and secure a climate resilient future for the nation. Conserving and restoring Colorado's priority lands and waters, climate refuges, wildlife corridors and movement zones will be critical to meeting that objective.

In December 2021, the Biden administration released its first America the Beautiful progress report, outlining the many strides the administration and Congress have made towards the goal. Included in this report was a section dedicated to meaningful state-level action taken since January 2021. Unfortunately, and surprisingly to the signers of this letter, Colorado was left off this list despite the numerous conservation achievements of the state since your administration took office in 2019, namely:

- The Executive Order to Conserve Colorado's Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors and the ensuing policy report: Opportunities to Improve Sensitive Habitat and Movement Route Connectivity for Colorado's Big Game Species;
- The passage and implementation of Senate Bill 19-181: Protect Public Welfare Oil and Gas Operations;
- The establishment of two new state parks at Fishers Peak and Sweetwater Lake;
- The Executive Order Creating the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative and Establishing Inter-Agency Conservation and Recreation Council;
- The ongoing update of the Colorado Water Plan and its environmental and recreational objectives;
- The over one hundred million dollars invested in conservation and restoration programs by the state legislature since 2019;
- The establishment of the Colorado Outdoor Equity Grant Program and the Keep Colorado Wild Pass, which together will inject tens of millions of dollars into future conservation efforts and improving outdoor access for disproportionately impacted communities;
- And the millions more to be secured via a visionary budget proposal in 2022 to advance conservation across the state.

Colorado's abundance of high-value conservation lands, whether private lands or lands owned and managed by the state, tribal nations, local governments, or the federal government, underscore the significant role Colorado must play to achieve this bold and visionary national conservation goal.

Coupled with Colorado's storied history of conservation leadership that spans across the aisle, we are better positioned than any other state to become a leading contributor to this national effort. As local leaders, we understand the value of maintaining Colorado's status as a national leader given the wide range of local benefits, such as increased opportunity for access, recreation, and appreciation of nature, preservation of cultural resources, the realization of a more inclusive vision of the outdoors, the improved resilience of our communities, natural systems, and wildlife to a changing climate, and the safeguarding of our economies and community vitality. If we are to realize these benefits, we must make a clear commitment as a state to the national goal.

Acknowledging both the challenges we face and the opportunities we are presented with, along with Colorado's long standing role as a national leader in land and water conservation, we write to request your administration adopt a commitment to the national conservation goal and put forth a similar, but uniquely Colorado plan to understand the lands and waters that can both immediately and over the long-run contribute towards a measurable state conservation goal. As local lawmakers, we are prepared to partner with you and your administration on important efforts, such as local outreach and stakeholding, and bolstering the voices of tribal nations, farmers, ranchers, hunters, anglers, conservationists, recreationists, and communities, including those disproportionately impacted, that depend on natural resources. We are both eager and ready to work with the state to tackle this ambitious, but necessary conservation challenge.

Members of Colorado's congressional delegation previously wrote to the Biden administration regarding the America the Beautiful plan, stating "success will require a whole-of-government approach, coordination across Federal, Tribal, State, and local agencies, a commitment to collaboration, a willingness to compromise, and good-faith conversations." We could not agree more.

We look forward to partnering with you on laying the groundwork for Colorado to step into the role as the national leader at the state level for implementing the America the Beautiful conservation initiative.

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Adams County Commissioner

Carrie Warren-Gully
Arapahoe County Commissioner

Marta Loachamin
Boulder County Commissioner

Matt Jones
Boulder County Commissioner

Todd Cohen
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Laurie Anderson
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Keith Baker
Chaffee County Commissioner

Randall Wheelock
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Paul Kashman
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Kathy Chandler-Henry
Eagle County Commissioner

Matt Scherr
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Jeanne McQueeny
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Jonathan Houck
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Liz Smith
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Marsha Porter Norton
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Matt Salka
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John Kefalas
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Greg Poschman
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Kelly McNicholas-Kury
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Beth Melton
Routt County Commissioner

Tim Corrigan
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Tom McCracken
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Scott Fetchheimer
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Hilary Cooper
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Kris Holstrom
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Lance Waring
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