

Vote YES on HB10-1361

Habitat Stamp Program Enhancements

Background:

In 2009, SB 09-235 was passed to reauthorize the Habitat Stamp Program. SB09-235 required that ongoing dialog be had during the interim to focus on finding solutions to outstanding issues of concern.

Representatives of agricultural organizations and various sportsmen organizations were brought together to have this dialog. These stakeholders, who represent the largest agricultural organizations, the largest sportsmen organizations and the Sportsmen's Advisory Group (SAG), sat down and discussed how to make the Habitat Stamp Program work for all stakeholders. The result is the introduction of HB10-1361.

What the bill does:

The Colorado General Assembly created the Habitat Stamp program and declared that "*Priorities for the expenditure of funds generated from the sale of habitat stamps and Colorado wildlife passports shall include protecting big game winter range and migration corridors, acquiring public access to wildlife-related recreation, including fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing, protecting habitat for species of concern, and preserving the diversity of wildlife enjoyed by Coloradans.*" HB 1361 states that this purpose can be achieved by using fee title acquisition, but **only after ensuring that all other options are explored**. This is consistent with current law that emphasizes the acquisition of easements and ensures that all other avenues are pursued first. (33-4-102.7 (4)(c)(I) C.R.S.) HB 1361 **does not** preclude the option of using fee title acquisition in situations where that option is the most viable option.

HB 1361 creates the ***Colorado Wildlife Habitat Stamp Operation, Maintenance, and Enhancement Fund***. Money in the fund will be used for the expenses associated with the operation, maintenance and enhancement of property that is purchased using Habitat Stamp funds. **This will ensure that there is always money available to maintain the habitat to meet the goals of habitat protection, hunting/fishing access, or preserving the diversity of Colorado's wildlife.** A site-specific evaluation will be done to evaluate the estimated costs for operation and maintenance and such amount will be deducted from the revenues of the sale of Habitat Stamps.

HB 1361 directs the Colorado Wildlife Commission to establish a process and guidelines to review all land acquired with Habitat Stamp moneys to see if it is consistent with the continued achievement of goals for which the property was originally acquired. This process would be to determine if the Wildlife Commission should sell all or portions of those lands acquired with Habitat Stamp moneys if land objectives are not met.

The bill stipulates that the Wildlife Commission **can use any available means to ensure that the habitat goals continue to be met** if the property is sold back into private ownership (i.e. conservation easements, management agreements, access agreements, etc). This will ensure that the wildlife habitat that is being protected by that DOW purchase would remain protected in the event that the property was sold.

This measure is a positive step forward in the working relationship between the largest stakeholders in Wildlife interests: landowners and sportsmen.

Please vote "YES" on HB10-1361

Supporting Organizations

Colorado Farm Bureau

Colorado Cattlemen's Association

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