



COMMISSIONERS

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Colorado Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

Senator Gail Schwartz
Senator Bruce Whitehead
Senator Greg Brophy
Senator Dan Gibbs
Senator Ted Harvey
Senator Ken Kester

Dear Honorable members of the Colorado Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

We are writing to you to respectfully request that you SUPPORT Senate Bill 10-98 that is before you. This bill provides a much needed funding option that will work to mitigate the currently unfunded mandate of noxious weed control.

As you are aware, Article XXVII, Section 3 of the Colorado Constitution directs 40% of lottery proceeds to the "Conservation Trust Fund for distribution to municipalities and counties and other eligible entities for parks, recreation and open space purposes..."

Counties that are large enough and fortunate enough to have public County lands and parks, recreation and open space programs can currently choose to use the funds they receive to maintain or enhance their parks and open space including performing weed control.

However, small rural counties with significant percentages of private agricultural lands or federal/state public lands do not enjoy the same tax base, administrative resources, or public services that their more urban counterparts can provide. To us, conservation means protecting all lands, public and private (since weeds can jump fence lines and do cross political boundaries), from noxious weeds. Noxious weeds ruin productive land whether it is a golf course or prime cropland or hay fields. Noxious weeds can go back and forth between private and public lands owned by any jurisdiction.

SB 10-98 would allow for all Colorado counties and their Conservation District partners to choose to put the Conservation Trust Fund resources they receive to work conserving and protecting public lands for parks, recreation, and open space. However, Conservation Trust Funds should also be allowed to be used for managing weeds on all public lands, including facilities and right-of-ways. The expansion of the eligible lands would then allow counties to free up resources to address agricultural and other areas.