



April 1, 2019

Dear Colorado Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of Colorado Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (COBHA), the fastest growing organization that represents sportsmen and women in North America, we write to express our strong support for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (CORE Act, S. 241/H.R. 823) and would like to thank Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) for introducing this legislation. The CORE Act provides important habitat protections that will have long term benefits for wildlife.

Contained within the landscapes highlighted in the CORE Act are headwaters, migration corridors, and ranges critical to the health of species including Colorado River cutthroat trout, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, desert bighorn sheep and many other species. The future of our hunting and fishing traditions and the North American Model of Wildlife Management depend on our ability to conserve quality habitat and to address the needs of wildlife in the face of dynamic challenges with increasing complexities. This bill does that, and as such, is uniquely important to hunters and anglers.

Title I: Continental Divide

The Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act provides a range of protections that will benefit wildlife. Most notable are the two new Wildlife Conservation Areas (WCAs) that the CORE Act would establish in Porcupine Gulch and in Williams Fork. The new WCAs would eliminate habitat fragmentation that is most evident along major roadways that intersect migration routes. In protecting a major migration corridor along I70, the Porcupine Gulch WCA plays an important role in ensuring a safe crossing point and the long-term health of many wildlife species. The expanded Wilderness protections in this bill would provide equally important benefits because of the important habitat values these landscapes hold for wildlife. Additionally, the Tenmile Range Recreation Management Area (RMA) would address inaccessible public land access issues for hunters and anglers. The loss of access is often cited as the no. one reason for hunter and angler decline. The CORE Act would protect recreational access in critical habitat areas in Colorado and secure the future of our hunter and fishing heritage.

Title II: San Juan Mountains

The CORE Act would preserve 2.5 miles of Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat and 17 total river miles. This is significant to the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, which only occupy 10 percent of their historic range. Protections for wildlife migration corridors for elk, deer and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep would also be implemented to safeguard world-class hunting and fishing opportunities and conserve a number of struggling and iconic wildlife species in this region from bighorns to Colorado River cutthroat to Gunnison sage-grouse.

Title III: Thompson Divide



Habitat fragmentation is an important issue facing wildlife and the CORE Act would help ensure that important habitat remains intact. Under Title III, 200,000 acres of public land would be protected from future oil and gas exploration and safeguarding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Title IV: Curecanti National Recreation Area

As noted previously, access is a priority concern for hunters and anglers. Expanding public fishing access was a promise made to anglers long ago and this legislation ensures that certainty will be achieved for anglers visiting these waters and further establishing Gunnison County as one of the premier fishing destinations in Colorado.

In 2017, hunters, anglers, and wildlife viewers contributed \$5.1 billion to Colorado's economic revenue. Residents of the third congressional district spend nearly \$2.2 billion on recreation annually. The landscapes contained within the CORE Act have significant habitat values important to wildlife, hunters and anglers, and our economy. Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers proudly backs the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act and we hope that you will prioritize its passage during the 116th Congress.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Cc: House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Chairwoman Debra Haaland (D-NM) and Ranking Member Don Young (R-AK)

