

J. BRYAN GWINN, Esq.

February 3, 2022

Sen. Cmte. Agriculture &
Natural Resources

RE: SB 22-031

To the Committee:

My name is Bryan Gwinn and I live right here in Denver in the Platt Park neighborhood. I'm a practicing attorney – partner at Volant Law LLC – a registered Democrat, and a life-long hunter. I came today to ask you to reject SB 22-031.

As I mentioned, I've been hunting my whole life. I grew up sitting in an Illinois tree stand waiting for whitetails. And when I moved to Colorado 17 years ago I immediately began hunting western big game. You can find me each September somewhere in the national forest with my bow looking for elk; and a month or so later I'm out with my rifle hunting for mule deer. I hunt rabbits, squirrels, duck and pheasant in-between and as I'm able. With hundreds of days in the field over the years I've only caught one glimpse of a bobcat as it crossed my headlights, and another time I saw a blur brown as a mountain lion disappear across a clearing. I've never hunted either of them. Nobody is allowed to hunt lynx.

With American exceptionalism a big topic of debate in so many areas there is one category where the American genius is undisputed – the so called “North American Model of Wildlife Management”. This is a conservation system that basically says “if an animal is not on the brink of extinction and therefore deserving of Endangered Species Act protection, then management of that species is charged to the state biologists, researchers, ecologists, zoologists, statisticians, and other career wildlife managers who maintain the resources for a variety of uses – and do so against the backdrop of competing, divergent and overlapping interests. A vote *against* SB 22-031 – even as it may be altered – is a vote *to stand with this proven legacy* of wildlife and resource management.

This bill strips Colorado Parks and Wildlife of an essential tool of wildlife management - that is, predator control – and restricts CPW's ability to manage state resources for multiple user groups against numerous parochial interests.

A recent CPW study on mountain lions found that *on average* a mountain lion will *kill one mule deer every week* – and over half the time they kill a fawn. That same study estimated a Colorado was home to over 4,000 lions – which a back of the napkin calculation can quickly account for the death of *hundreds of thousands of mule deer annually*. Can our deer and elk herds sustain this attrition rate? Does our existing habitat have the carrying capacity for the current ratios of predator to prey? Can – with passage of this bill – those ratios be left to their own devices? Are wildlife numbers adequate to meet the needs of those who use and enjoy our natural resources?

I'm just a lawyer, so I don't know the answers to these questions. I'm not a wildlife biologist. And, respectfully, neither are those on this committee. The answers to these questions should

DENVER, COLO.

be left to the wildlife professionals who are dedicated to the long term preservation and thriving of such species within a diverse, interdependent, and changing ecosystem.

So if you know anyone who each fall voluntarily inserts themselves into the food chain, with the hopes of filling their freezer, so that they can feeds their friends and family with fresh, delicious, venison - then this bill threatens that heritage. If Colorado enjoys its status as a destination for world class western big game hunting, wildlife tourism, and the place where anyone can get a chance to see the deer and the antelope play – and (lets not forget) the billions of dollars that comes with it, then this bill threatens that reputation.

And if you are worried about too many lions getting killed – then this bill won't do anything about it. State agencies will simply be forced to shell out dollars for harvesting, trapping, mitigation efforts, and other measures to cull predator populations rather than simply allowing willing and able sportsmen and women to volunteer – *and pay for* – the privilege to participate in our state's wildlife management.

The state wildlife agencies enjoy a level of public trust that, frankly, other political entities and legislative bodies do not. And so, when it comes to protecting our most precious resources, lets continue to leave it up to science.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Gwinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "G".

303/945-9010

bryan.gwinn@gmail.com