

AGRICULTURE, WILDLIFE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

AGRICULTURE

CCI recognizes agriculture is an essential economic sector and supports activities and measures that work to ensure the profitability of agriculture. CCI supports programs that encourage state owned and operated facilities to use Colorado agricultural products where feasible. CCI supports efforts to promote the agriculture industry in Colorado. CCI supports right-to-farm ordinances and the acquisition of conservation easements and conservation leases to maintain agricultural uses. CCI supports efforts that manage and minimize noxious weeds, undesirable plants, rodents, insects and other negative impacts and undue burdens on agricultural interests. CCI endorses Colorado's strategic plan to stop the spread of noxious weeds and works with other endorsing organizations in the public and private sectors to implement this plan. CCI supports current Colorado open range laws and fence laws and will oppose any changes that weaken those existing laws. CCI supports the management of fuel loads and healthy forests. CCI recognizes the unique needs of producers and opposes actions that jeopardize the viability of the agricultural industry and which fail to respect private property rights. CCI supports the policy that land classified as agriculture and the assessed valuation of agricultural land should be based on production capacity versus market value.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are critical to the viability of agriculture, wildlife habitat and the environment. CCI believes the public-at-large, not individual property owners, must bear the burden to protect vital wetlands. CCI urges Congress and the states to review practices, statutes, and policies in order to protect agricultural interests.

WATER

CCI recognizes adequate supplies of water are critical to the agricultural industry and that water is one of Colorado's most precious natural resources. CCI supports Colorado's doctrine of prior appropriation, necessary water conservation efforts, and reuse efforts to seek and maintain state primacy and county control, the application of county powers, including 1041 powers, to water projects to address local impacts, and protection of Colorado's water resources. CCI believes that 1041 powers must be broadly and liberally construed to ensure maximum flexibility and authority for counties and will oppose any attempt to limit the application of local 1041 powers. CCI supports cooperative statewide water planning efforts which do not negatively impact the basin of origin communities and are supported by those communities. CCI opposes attempts by the federal government to usurp the system of prior appropriation in the issuance of necessary federal permits and opposes federally reserved water rights. CCI supports efforts to maintain and seek state primacy of federal water quality programs and believes provision of adequate funding to counties is essential to ensure compliance with the federal Clean Water Act.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife resources, in addition to their inherent values, provide crucial economic benefits to all citizens and CCI supports enhancement of the local government role, including the creation of wildlife advisory committees in the management and utilization of Colorado's wildlife resources. CCI encourages the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to work with counties in conducting actual census counts of big game populations to calibrate existing population estimate models. CCI supports efforts of the Colorado Wildlife Commission and the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to manage species appropriately with due consideration of cost-benefit and economic

impacts. CCI endorses activities that improve hunting and fishing within the state consistent with local authority while minimizing and mitigating impacts from hunting and fishing on other affected areas and private property. CCI supports management of predatory animals and seeks funding from the Legislature to help offset these costs. CCI supports reasonable reimbursement for damage to crops and other private property caused by wildlife. CCI supports efforts to amend the Endangered Species Act in order to improve flexibility under the act. CCI demands consideration of sound-science, cost-benefit and economic impact analyses and recovery plans when proposing species for listing and balancing of the impact of the Endangered Species Act with that of other legislation. CCI supports proactive and creative efforts to restore or reintroduce endangered species considering all potential impacts and subject to local government involvement and approval.

RURAL AFFAIRS

CCI recognizes the uniqueness and necessity of rural counties in Colorado and urges county and state officials to take a strong leadership role in revitalizing communities in their county. CCI believes local control is essential and will oppose any efforts to supersede, override, preempt or limit local authority. CCI supports programs assisting rural communities with development and fostering sustainable rural economies. CCI supports full staffing and funding of all Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Research and Experiment Station agent positions by Colorado State University and believes counties must have a voting seat on the CSU Extension Advisory Board due to county contributions to this program. CCI opposes renewable energy mandates that will result in undue fiscal hardship to rural agriculture users.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

CCI supports the adoption of telecommunications policy that encourages equitable access to telecommunications services (especially highspeed internet access) in both urban and rural areas but that does not unduly burden any single segment of the telecommunications market. CCI supports the development of federal resources and other mechanisms to assist providing telecommunications services, including both data and voice transmission, to all areas. Universal service funds should be paid into by all communication service providers and should be used for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing service in high-cost areas.