

COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

RESOLUTION – 24-01

Title: RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN COLORADO

Effective Date: January X, 2024

WHEREAS, two of the greatest environmental challenges of our time are climate change and biodiversity loss- two challenges that are intertwined, as habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, combined with a changing climate will continue to exacerbate biodiversity loss; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is concerned that without statewide standards, oversight, or requirement for CPW consultation and endorsement, the acceleration of renewable energy generation and transmission project development (“renewable energy development”) will consume, fragment, or make unusable important habitats statewide, thereby adversely affecting biodiversity; migratory birds; bats; pollinators; big game herds; State- and Federally-listed threatened and endangered species; species of greatest conservation need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan; the quality of hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities; the ability of Colorado Parks and Wildlife to effectively manage wildlife; local economies; and the revenue that Colorado Parks and Wildlife depends on from hunting licenses; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission urges the State to develop statewide regulations based upon Colorado Parks and Wildlife expertise; the best available data, science, policies, and technology; as well as public and industry input; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in so doing, the Commission believes that the most effective ways to expand renewable energy development across the state while collectively minimizing the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on wildlife are:

- 1) Ensuring early, mandatory consultation between Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff and renewable energy developers and in particular prior to disturbances of any ground, water, or air and prior to any permitting from any state, county, or local authority for renewable energy developments.
- 2) Incentivizing the expansion of renewable energy development through legislative and policy initiatives to avoid new wildlife habitat disturbance and minimize cumulative adverse impacts.
- 3) Promoting renewable energy development on previously disturbed lands with relatively low fish and wildlife habitat value and anticipated community conflicts through financial or permitting/process incentives.
- 4) Identifying and avoiding key habitats for renewable energy development for vulnerable and/or important species, and critical seasonal uses of those habitats, as well as areas that may be most critical for ensuring climate change resiliency.
- 5) Applying the best available science to: periodic updates of habitat maps; recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts to wildlife species their habitats from renewable

energy development and associated activity; and best management practices specific to the siting and design of commercial wind, solar, energy storage, and transmission projects, at a minimum.

- 6) Employing light-mitigating technology systems on renewable energy developments, including all wind turbines to reduce impacts to migratory birds, bats, pollinators, and neighboring communities while still ensuring compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.
- 7) Siting and permitting renewable energy development according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff recommendations for project design, alternative location analysis based on site-specific circumstances, wildlife protection plans, wildlife mitigation plans, study protocols and monitoring, and decommissioning plans.
- 8) Siting and permitting renewable energy development adhering to the mitigation hierarchy by first avoiding adverse impacts to important wildlife habitat. Where not possible to avoid direct and indirect impacts, adverse impacts should be minimized, and habitat loss and fragmentation must be offset through compensatory mitigation pursuant to a comprehensive statewide program.
- 9) Meaningful Colorado Parks and Wildlife involvement in forward-looking, statewide and region-wide renewable energy generation and transmission planning efforts.
- 10) Collaboration and cooperation among the State, counties, Tribes, renewable energy companies, and research institutions on pre- and post-construction wildlife monitoring work and longer-term research projects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission requests to be updated quarterly on renewable energy-development, policy, and planning efforts.