

COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY

Title: **ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN COLORADO**
Effective Date: September 13, 2007
Revised Date:

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the intent of the Commission to uphold the legislative declaration under Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 33 Wildlife and Parks and Outdoor Recreation Article 1 “Wildlife – General Provisions” that wildlife and their environment are to be protected, preserved, enhanced and managed for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of this state and its visitors. Therefore, in the planning and management of energy development operations the Commission encourages an approach that balances development with wildlife conservation and the hunting, fishing, and recreation traditions and economies they support.

Hunting, angling and wildlife viewing contribute significantly to the economy of the State of Colorado, benefiting local economies and providing jobs in such fields as manufacturing, retail sales, and wildlife related service industries such as, outfitting and guiding, etc. In addition to these extrinsic economic benefits, the wildlife of the State of Colorado also provide intrinsic, positive enhancement to all types of wildlife-related recreational experiences for both residents of and visitors to the State of Colorado.

The Commission recognizes that significant energy development of all types, including mineral, solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectric and others, has occurred and will continue in habitats where important wildlife species exist in Colorado. Disturbance to the landscape resulting from energy exploration and development as well as the related increased level of human activities and transmission infrastructure, will result in greater impacts to wildlife and its habitat, and may create habitat fragmentation. The Commission is concerned that these impacts could affect some of our most important big game herds and ultimately the quality of hunting, the ability of the Division of Wildlife to effectively manage these herds, local economies, and the revenue that the Division depends on from hunting licenses. The Commission is also concerned about the potential loss of species and impacts that could result in federal listing under the Endangered Species Act.

However, the Commission does recognize the important role energy companies play in providing clean, safe and efficient energy for America’s homes and businesses as well as the substantial economic contribution resulting from jobs, taxes, mineral royalties, etc.

Therefore, the Commission encourages responsible development of the State’s energy resources through the use of the best technology available to first avoid and minimize impacts and then to mitigate remaining unavoidable environmental impacts to Colorado’s wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Commission pledges to assist the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission in their efforts to minimize adverse impacts to wildlife resources affected by oil and gas development as outlined in Title 34 Mineral Resources, Article 60 Oil and Gas Conservation. The Commission will strongly advocate that energy development occur in as ecologically

responsible a manner as possible. In so doing, the Commission feels that the most effective ways to reduce the effects on wildlife include but are not limited to:

- 1) Identifying key habitats for important species and critical seasonal uses of those habitats
- 2) Assisting in planning orderly field development that takes such information into account
- 3) Promoting a working list of best management practices to provide to industry
- 4) Providing training for staff and industry employees
- 5) Developing onsite and offsite mitigation strategies
- 6) Working with energy companies to secure funding for habitat improvements

The Commission also encourages industry to collaborate with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and assist with funding on research and monitoring projects that will assist with measuring and minimizing impacts now and in the future.