



April 23, 2026

Colorado State Senate
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203
Re: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Confirmations

Dear Members of the Colorado Senate:

The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), representing Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Garfield, Grand, Delta, and Montrose counties, urges the full Senate to reject Dr. John Emerick and Christopher Sichko and confirm Fran Sylva-Blayney to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Yesterday, the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee voted 7–0 for Silva Blayney, 5–2 against Emerick, and 4–3 against Sichko. That extremely rare result reflects a broader problem: the Commission is losing trust because it is drifting away from science, transparency, and balanced representation.

Northwest Colorado lives with CPW decisions every day. Those decisions affect ranching families, hunting opportunity, local economies, private-land habitat, and whether landowners continue partnering with the agency. Trust has been damaged by issues like the wolf reintroduction conflicts and, most recently, by the March 2026 fur-sales meeting. Rural communities are told to “trust the science”, yet commissioners say they are “voting their values” and advanced the fur-sales petition against CPW’s science and the Director’s recommendation. They are told to accept the “will of the voters” on wolf reintroduction under Proposition 114, while the Commission pushed a fur-sales ban forward even after Denver voters rejected that fur-ban measure in 2024. This is why trust is breaking down.

AGNC warned about this pattern when we opposed the confirmations of Jessica Beaulieu, Jack Murphy, and John Tutchton, because we saw that ideology was being put ahead of CPW’s own science and public process. Those commissioners have since been at the center of an Open Meetings Law lawsuit and settlement and of the divisive fur-sales decision that advanced against staff recommendation. Rural communities have been warning for years that certain nominees would deepen these problems, and events have proven those warnings correct. It is time for the Senate to take those rural voices seriously and change course.

Dr. John Emerick: AGNC urges a no vote. He signed a 2025 petition to narrow wolf depredation compensation; after his appointment it was withdrawn and resubmitted without his name, and he has said he does not need to recuse himself when it returns to the Commission. He voted to advance the fur-sales petition despite CPW staff and the Director recommending denial and maintains close ties to advocacy groups active on wolves and lethal control. For ranching families already dealing with wolf losses and compensation uncertainty, that does not feel neutral.

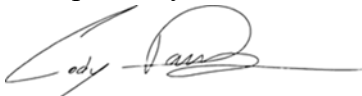
Mr. Christopher Sichko: AGNC urges a no vote. He has said his “ultimate goal” is “the regeneration and rewilding of the American Great Plains,” publicly supported Proposition 127, and argued hunting interests have too much weight in CPW management. After his appointment, a Colorado Accountability Project article documented with screenshots that he removed explicit “rewilding” and similar advocacy language from his materials and reshaped his profile to look more like that of a sportsman than an activist. That raises serious concerns about honesty and trust. Hunters and anglers fund much of CPW’s work and deserve authentic representation in the seat reserved for them. AGNC does not believe he belongs on the Commission in any seat.

Commissioner Fran Sylva-Blayney: AGNC asks for a yes vote. AGNC was circumspect when she was first appointed, but Commissioner Sylva-Blayney has proved herself. The committee recommended her unanimously. She brings real outfitting experience, direct engagement with hunters and anglers, and voted with CPW staff and the Director against advancing the fur-sales petition. Her confirmation would help rebuild trust between CPW and the people who live with these decisions every day.

For these reasons, AGNC respectfully urges the Colorado Senate to vote no on Dr. John Emerick, vote no on Christopher Sichko, and vote yes on Commissioner Fran Sylva-Blayney.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Cody Davis
AGNC Chair
Mesa County Commissioner



Doug Overton
AGNC Vice-Chair
Rio Blanco County Commissioner