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Commissioners join in on AGNC push against Governor, CPW regarding wolf reintroduction

Commissioners say they're greatly concerned hearing that commission members are advocating to fast-track wolf introduction next year

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Moffat County commissioners, in partnership with the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) announced that they've submitted a Colorado Open Records Act request to determine if Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Governor Jared Polis' office are working to accelerate the development of a plan and limit public and stakeholder input on this important matter.

Commissioners Ray Beck, Don Cook and Donald Broom stated Tuesday morning that they're submitting a letter of support to local media as part of a united front the county joined against wolves.

Proposition 114 passed on the Nov. 3 ballot by less than 2%. Originally, the reintroduction of grey wolves on designated lands in Colorado, west of the continental divide, was scheduled to take at least three years before being implemented in 2023.

As of late though, many members within AGNC have stated they're hearing that wildlife commission members are advocating to fast-track wolf introduction (releasing wolves in 2021) and foregoing adequate time to develop a comprehensive management plan.

According to Moffat County Natural Resources Director Jeff Comstock, Moffat County joined forces on the issue with fellow AGNC counties, as well as livestock associations, to have a four-phased approach to the issue of wolf reintroduction being implemented in 2021. Comstock stated Tuesday that the county received confirmation that Gov. Polis is pushing for a 2021 implementation, which would go against the language from the proposition that was on the ballot.

Comstock added that the approach would be from a legislative approach, a legal battle, a publicity effort, and a CORA request from AGNC.

"The county strongly objects to any efforts that would short-circuit the ballot language, or abandon the planning window provided by Proposition 114, which could also interfere with public input and transparency, which jeopardizes the safety of our community and our economy," Beck stated.

"...I'm concerned about those wolves; I sure am," Broom added. "Those people in Sand Wash Basin should be concerned too, because this would effect horses too.

"It's just amazing how much out of state money was spent in state to get this on the ballot," Broom added. "California, there's a group out of there that spent so much and pushed for the necessary signatures just to get this on the ballot. That's a scary thing."

Broom raised concerns about how much the reintroduction – which is proposed at \$5.7 million – would cost taxpayers in the process.

Cook voiced his frustrations and concerns with the reintroduction of wolves and how that will raise additional issues for Moffat County in the future.

"It's very disconcerting knowing all of the issues it will create for us in the future," Cook said. "People that do no our lifestyle or way of life have come in and tried to change things, and they have no cares in the world about it; they're achieving their goals and it's very concerning."

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