

Attention: Members of Colorado's Electorate
Re: Proposition 127 – Initiative to Prohibit Hunting of Mountain Lion, Bobcat, and Lynx
Date: September 27, 2024
Position: Opposition

Dear Colorado Voter,

The undersigned organizations, representing thousands of hunters, trappers, and other wildlife conservationists who are proud of being America's original conservationists, write to express our strong opposition to Proposition 127. This political effort mischaracterizes the legal, regulated harvest of mountain lions and bobcats in Colorado as trophy hunting and would prohibit these activities in the state. It is our hope that addressing the emotionally driven misinformation of this initiative's proponents will encourage you to join us in opposing this effort, thereby safeguarding an economically, ecologically, and culturally important way of life for many Coloradans.

The intentionally misleading manner proponents of Proposition 127 seek to undermine the professional wildlife managers employed by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department is a real issue. The experts at CPW, using the best available science, work tirelessly to manage and conserve Colorado's public trust fish and wildlife resources.

For mountain lions and bobcats, CPW relies on the current legal, regulated harvest by hunters and trappers to maintain populations within the constraints of both biological and social carrying capacities as established by CPW's science-based management practices. This ensures that populations remain in balance with the rest of the ecosystem while minimizing human-wildlife conflicts (i.e., an abundance of mountain lions attacking pets, livestock and humans). CPW achieves this balance through data collection and scientific analysis by their professionally trained biologists.

It should be noted that we specifically mention bobcats and mountain lions here because existing state and federal regulations prohibit lynx harvest by anyone as part of Colorado's lynx restoration efforts. In fact, Colorado's sportsmen and women go out of their way to ensure that bobcat hunting and trapping does not negatively impact lynx. So by voting in favor of Proposition 127 and supporting "ballot box biology," you are undermining centuries' worth of cumulative wildlife management experience within CPW's ranks that has successfully guided CPW since its creation.

Proponents of Proposition 127 are also relying on other misleading information in their attempt to sway voters. Most prominently, the use of the term "trophy hunting" as it relates to the legal, regulated harvest of mountain lions is simply and intentionally incorrect. In Colorado hunters are required to prepare all edible portions of the animal for human consumption. In other words, it is already against the law to harvest a mountain lion just for the "trophy". While certain parts of the animal that have no practical human use are often retained as a physical memory of the hunt, no parts of the animal are left to go to waste. Any claim otherwise is wrong, and the rare real-world examples should be reported immediately to officials as a violation of Colorado's wanton waste statutes and regulations.

You, as a voter, must ask yourself the questions that are truly before you. Equipped with the facts presented here, it should become clear that emotion-based “ballot box biology” is harmful, and that professional biologists work closely with hunters and trappers, and in many cases rely on legal, regulated hunting of predators like mountain lions and bobcats to achieve ecosystem management objectives. Recognizing this, do you, as a Coloradan, care about the health of these species in your state? Do you care about the health of the overall ecosystem in Colorado, one that has evolved over time to include, and often rely upon, hunters and trappers to maintain the necessary balances? Finally, do you believe that those who do participate in these activities should be prohibited from doing so based on the misguided, unfounded, and emotion-based positions of others?

Proposition 127 is not a referendum on your views or your own participation in these activities, but rather a referendum on the successful systems that have led to the sustainability of Colorado’s now thriving big cat populations and its ecosystem as a whole. You will never be forced to hunt, trap, or otherwise harvest a mountain lion or bobcat, but you still benefit from the participation of others. Knowing this, we simply encourage you to ponder these questions, show up to the polls on November 5, and join us in opposing this misguided and misleading attempt to prevent others from doing so.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Coloradans for Responsible Wildlife Management
Colorado Bowhunters Association
Colorado Outfitter Association
Colorado Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation
Colorado State Muzzle Loading Association
Colorado State Senator Perry Will
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Gunnison Wildlife Association
Houston Safari Club
Howl For Wildlife
International Hunter Education Association USA
Keep Routt Wild
Mule Deer Foundation
Muley Fanatic Foundation
National Deer Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides

Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Rocky Mountain Big Game Recovery
Rocky Mountain Big Horn Society
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Safari Club International Foundation
Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
United Houndsman of Colorado
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation