

February 20, 2013

To: Members Senate Agricultural, Natural Resources & /energy Committee
From: Eddie Kochman eddiekochman@aol.com 303-919-6639
Subject: Comments related to Senate Bill 13-175, Wildlife Habitat Stamp

I am a lifelong angler and hunter and support reauthorization of the Wildlife Habitat Stamp program. However, I have concerns regarding segments of the proposed legislation, which I will summarize along with recommendations for your consideration.

COLD WATER STREAMS, RIVERS AND RELATED FISHERIES

In the bill summary, page 2, and lines 15 to 16 the wording gives priority to protecting big game winter range and migration corridors with stamp revenue. While I support this objective, I recommend a similar priority be given to cold-water streams and rivers on state federal and private lands. **RATIONAL:** Cold water stream and river habitat is one of the most threatened in Colorado and deserves more emphasis than it currently receives in expenditures of habitat stamp revenue. In addition the majority of habitat stamp revenue is generated by non-resident and resident anglers who fish coldwater streams and rivers and other waters.

USE OF HABITAT STAMP REVENUE ON EXISTING STATE WILDLIFE AREAS

The wording on page 3, lines 2 through 5 appears to mandate that habitat stamp revenue can only be used on lands that were acquired or controlled in some manner with habitat stamp revenue. If this is the correct interpretation then stamp funding could not be used for important habitat projects on current and future lands that may be acquired with other sources of revenue, including license fees. I feel the Parks and Wildlife Director and Commission should have the legislative authority to use stamp revenue on all existing properties to accomplish protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, along with public access. **RATIONAL:** Currently Parks and Wildlife has serious budget issues that limit expenditures not only for habitat related projects, but also for capitol maintenance on properties. Use of stamp revenue for habitat and access related projects on existing lands should be an option of the Director and Commission in coordination with the Habitat Committee.

USE OF HABITAT STAMP REVENUE TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE HABITAT AND CREATE PUBLIC ACCESS IN HIGH POPULATION AREAS

Past expenditures of habitat stamp revenue has been concentrated in rural areas and the primary priority has big game winter range and migration corridors. Along the entire Front Range opportunity exists to protect a dwindling base of important wildlife habitat in cooperation with local governments. Similar opportunity exists to expand opportunity for public access to fishing, especially in lakes and ponds that are now closed for public access. This priority should be addressed in the legislation.

RATIONAL: Rapid loss of urban-based wildlife is occurring along with limitations on public access. Habitat stamp revenue should be used to mitigate this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.