



For Immediate Release

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### **AGNC Counties Advocate for Local Government Participation in Wolf Planning Process**

Grand Junction – Members of the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) submitted a letter to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission advocating for the creation of a Local Government Advisory Group to provide for meaningful county participation in the development of the Colorado wolf introduction plan.

Proposition 114 authorized the reintroduction of gray wolves on designated lands in Colorado west of the continental divide beginning no later than December 31, 2023. The development plan thus far outlined by the CPW Commission provides for convening a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG is expected to consist of 12-16 members to represent 13 different interests relegating counties to minimal input in a process that has significant impact.

Counties are responsible to their constituents for the health, safety, and welfare of their communities. When state or federal agencies need assistance, the counties are responsible for providing that support. Counties are expected to develop land use and resource management plans which need to be considered when it comes to decisions being made by state and federal entities. AGNC requests that counties across the designated areas west of the Continental Divide be included in a Local Government Advisory Group to provide meaningful insights to the wolf introduction plan. Minimal county representation on the SAG will not adequately address the various issues and concerns across the broad landscape of the Western Slope.

AGNC Chairman, Commissioner Mike Samson, stated, “Voters in our counties understand the significant economic impact wolves will have on our wildlife and ag producers. Our members recognize that the state has an obligation to follow through with introduction of wolves in our communities; the counties and the state also have obligations to those who live, work, and play in those counties. It is critical that our members be included in the planning process in a meaningful way.”

AGNC members have made it clear to the administration, the Department of Natural Resources and Colorado Parks and Wildlife that county land use, private land provisions and socio-economic pressures of the ballot measure need to be appropriately addressed. Those concerns cannot be addressed by excluding western Colorado counties from a meaningful role in developing the plan and implementing the process for wolf reintroduction in the region.

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