A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING RECOGNITION OF THE THIRD SATURDAY IN MAY AS A STATE HOLIDAY, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, DESIGNATING THE THIRD SATURDAY IN MAY AS "PUBLIC LANDS DAY".

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries.)

The bill designates the fourth Monday in March as "Public Lands Day" to recognize the significant contributions that national public lands within Colorado make to wildlife, recreation, the economy, and to
Coloradans' quality of life.

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Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) Colorado contains a variety of national, state, and local public lands, including national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, monuments, wilderness areas, and other public lands;

(b) Colorado's public lands reflect many of our most noble democratic ideals, because they are open and accessible to everyone, no matter how rich or poor;

(c) Colorado's public lands are defining features of the state and are a foundation for our quality of life by supporting the vitality of our communities, as well as representing Colorado's common heritage, fossils marking where dinosaurs roamed, ancient ruins and petroglyphs dotting the canyons, and historic mining towns nestled in steep-sided valleys;

(d) Colorado's public lands feature an amazingly diverse range of landscapes, from the snow-capped peaks of the Rocky Mountains down to rushing rivers, red rock canyons to grassy plains, grasslands, and tree-lined mountain valleys;

(e) Colorado's public lands provide many benefits to our residents and support a wide variety of activities, from recreational pursuits, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and rafting, to natural resource development;

(f) Colorado's public lands have a substantial impact on economic development and jobs through mineral extraction, timber sales, ranching, tourism, and the outdoor recreation industry;
(g) Colorado's public lands contribute to Colorado's clean air and clean water; __

(h) Coloradans will benefit when the three levels of government in the federal, state, and local government systems are working in greater harmony and in full partnership to serve diverse public needs for access and utilization of public lands;

(i) Coloradans of all races, ethnicities, occupations, and lifestyles continue to derive multiple benefits from the traditional, long-standing multiple-use management philosophy of public lands under the stewardship of the National Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management, practices that reflect the public support for policies incorporating a judicious balance between aesthetic, recreational, and economic values;

(j) Coloradans have demonstrated for over a century the ability to balance the values of preservation, conservation, and economic productivity, clearly indicating that these values are not in conflict;

(k) Coloradans overwhelmingly prefer to maintain the historic balance between conservation and public access to public lands and reject additional and unwise restrictions on public access via roads and trails;

(l) Coloradans recognize the need for giving a higher priority to proactive management measures to conserve and protect national forests from invasive and harmful species and from wildfires;

(m) Coloradans believe that federal agencies and the President should consult with state and local elected bodies, including the General Assembly, before designating new national monuments;

(n) Coloradans would be well served by a reform and greater legislative oversight of the current federal regulatory process, wherein the
diverse vital interests of Coloradans are too often not adequately represented in the adjudication and settlement of federal regulatory issues, resulting too often in "sweetheart" consent decrees between plaintiffs and federal agencies; and

(o) It is appropriate for the state to publicly observe and pay tribute to the importance of Colorado's public lands by observing Public Lands Day on the third Saturday in May in each year.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 24-11-113 as follows:

24-11-113. Public lands day. (1) The third Saturday in May in each year is known as "Public Lands Day", and appropriate observance may be held by the public and in all public schools of the state in tribute to the importance of public lands in the state.

(2) Annually the governor shall issue a proclamation calling for the celebration of Public Lands Day.

SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 10, 2016, if adjournment sine die is on May 11, 2016); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2016 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.