

Summary of Legislation

2024



Agriculture

During the 2024 legislative session, the General Assembly passed several pieces of legislation related to veterinary care, species conservation, public engagement, and potatoes.

Veterinary Care

Both [House Bill 24-1047](#) and [House Bill 24-1048](#) focus on veterinary care in Colorado. The first bill concerns the scope of practice for veterinary technicians (VT) and veterinarian technician specialists (VTS). Specifically, the bill establishes a framework for the supervision and delegation of veterinary care by veterinarians to VTs and VTSs and outlines a set of tasks that these professionals may perform.

The second bill concerns the use of telehealth in veterinary medicine. The bill requires that a veterinarian-client-patient relationship be established, which must include an initial in-person, physical exam of the animal. Once the relationship has been established, a licensed veterinarian can use telehealth to provide veterinary services.

Species Conservation

Multiple bills were passed concerning vulnerable species protection.

[House Bill 24-1117](#) adds rare plants and invertebrates to the list of species that can be studied and conserved by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under the

“Nongame, Endangered, or Threatened Species Conservation Act,” which is renamed to be the “Nongame, Endangered, or Threatened Wildlife and Rare Plant Conservation Act.” The bill allows for CPW to conduct investigations and surveys of rare plants and invertebrates to determine any necessary conservation and management measures, and to undertake programs designed to conserve, protect, and perpetuate rare plants and invertebrates.

[Senate Bill 24-171](#) authorizes CPW to reintroduce the North American Wolverine in Colorado. As long as the wolverine remains on the list of threatened or endangered species under federal law, CPW may not reintroduce the wolverine until the species is designated as a nonessential experimental population by rule established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. If CPW reintroduces the wolverine, it must create rules for providing payment of fair compensation to owners of livestock for losses caused by wolverines.

The legislature typically passes a bill every year to authorize funding from the Species Conservation Trust Fund. [Senate Bill 24-199](#) authorized \$5 million in spending for specific programs designed to conserve native species that are threatened or endangered under state or federal law, or are likely to become candidate species as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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Public Engagement

In 2011, the Division of Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Recreation were, and their respective commissions, merged to form Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Parks and Wildlife Commission. In the merging, the requirement that public meetings be held was removed. [Senate Bill 24-026](#) renews the public engagement requirement. The bill requires the Governor-appointed members of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the Colorado Agricultural Commission to participate in at least two public meetings each year.

Potatoes

Colorado farmers grow about 60,000 acres of potatoes each year and about 10,000 of these acres are dedicated to certified seed potato production. These potatoes amount to a value of almost \$200 million per year in Colorado.



Photo courtesy of Colorado Department of Agriculture.

The Colorado Seed Potato Act regulates the distribution and planting of seed potatoes. [Senate Bill 24-137](#) amended the act to require potato growers to submit any

uncertified potato seed stock to the certifying authority, the Department of Agriculture (CDA), for testing prior to planting. The CDA must then approve the uncertified potato seed stock if it meets the standards established by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Raw Milk

Although sales of raw milk are prohibited in Colorado, consumption of raw milk is permitted when the consumer owns the cow or goat that produces the milk, or through cow share and goat share programs and receives the milk directly. [Senate Bill 24-143](#) would have legalized the sale of raw cow or goat milk when it is sold directly to consumers at the point of production, the consumer's residence, or at a farmer's market or roadside market. The bill was deemed lost in the Senate and did not become law.

Animal Welfare

A few bills focused specifically on pets and animal welfare in Colorado. These bills include:

- [House Bill 24-1354](#), which requires any pet animal facility licensed by the state to notify patrons of an infectious disease outbreak;
- [Senate Bill 24-045](#), which prohibits an animal shelter from releasing an unsterilized pet to a prospective owner; and
- [House Bill 24-1458](#), which creates the Division of Animal Welfare within CDA.

