

Proposition 127: Prohibit Bobcat, Lynx, and Mountain Lion Hunting

Placed on the ballot by citizen initiative • Passes with a majority vote

1 **Proposition 127 proposes amending the Colorado statutes to:**

- 2 • prohibit the hunting or trapping of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions;
- 3 • continue to permit the killing of these animals under certain circumstances; and
- 4 • establish penalties for violations.

5 **What Your Vote Means**

6 **YES**

7 A “yes” vote on Proposition 127 would
8 make it illegal to hunt bobcats, lynx, and
9 mountain lions in Colorado.

10 **NO**

11 A “no” vote on Proposition 127 would
12 continue to allow the hunting of bobcats
13 and mountain lions, as it is currently
14 regulated by the state. Hunting lynx would
15 remain illegal under state and federal law.

16 **Summary and Analysis of Proposition 127**

17 **What does Proposition 127 do?**

18 Proposition 127 would prohibit intentionally killing, wounding, pursuing, entrapping, or
19 discharging a deadly weapon at bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions in Colorado. While the
20 measure uses the term “trophy hunting,” it bans all hunting, pursuing, or entrapping of
21 bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions regardless of intent. Individuals convicted of any of these
22 activities are subject to up to 364 days in jail, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both, and a five-year
23 prohibition on holding a license issued by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), with more
24 stringent penalties for subsequent convictions.

25 **Would there still be instances where these animals can be killed lawfully?**

26 Certain scenarios are not unlawful under the measure and thus are not prohibited, including
27 when bobcats, lynx, or mountain lions are killed:

- 28 • in the defense of human life, livestock, personal property, or a motor vehicle;
- 29 • by an employee or contractor of any federal, state, or local agency acting in an official
30 capacity or with a special license from CPW, including to manage animals that pose a
31 threat to agricultural resources;
- 32 • as a result of an accident involving a motor vehicle, vessel, or train; or
- 33 • for scientific research or humane euthanasia.

1 **How is hunting regulated in Colorado?**

2 CPW is responsible for wildlife management in Colorado and administers regulations for
 3 hunting, fishing, and trapping as adopted by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission.
 4 State law requires wildlife and their environment to be protected, preserved, enhanced, and
 5 managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people and visitors of Colorado. CPW
 6 manages individual animal species differently and uses regulated hunting, fishing, and
 7 trapping to meet management goals. Table 1 discusses the differences between bobcats,
 8 lynx, and mountain lions and the different hunting regulations associated with each.

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**Table 1
 Bobcats, Lynx, and Mountain Lions in Colorado**

| | Bobcats | Lynx | Mountain Lions |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Description of animals | Bobcats are medium-sized cats, ranging from 28-37 inches long fully grown with reddish fur, often with distinctive black spots and black stripes. They have a stubbed tail and short tufted ears. | Lynx are medium-sized cats, ranging from 31-51 inches long fully grown with grayish fur. They often have large back paws, long tufts on their ears, and a solid black stubbed tail. | Mountain lions are large cats, over six feet long fully grown, with tannish fur, a white underbelly, and a long black tipped tail. They are also known as cougars, pumas, panthers, or catamounts. |
| Species conservation status | Bobcats are not currently classified as threatened in Colorado or in the United States. Their exact number is uncertain, but Colorado’s bobcat population is considered widespread across the state, stable, and possibly increasing in some areas. | The lynx (also called the Canada lynx) is currently listed as endangered in Colorado and as threatened under federal law. Colorado began its effort to reintroduce lynx in 1999 and now has what is considered a stable population. | Mountain lions are not currently classified as threatened in Colorado or in the United States. There are an estimated 3,800 to 4,400 mountain lions in the state, which is considered a stable population. |
| Hunting regulations | All hunters in Colorado must have a hunter education certification to buy a hunting license. Bobcats can be hunted with a furbearer license between December and February, and there is no limit on how many bobcats can be hunted. All harvested bobcats or their pelts must be inspected and tagged by CPW. | Because of their protected status, state and federal law currently prohibits all hunting and trapping of lynx, punishable by fines, imprisonment, or hunting license suspension. | In addition to a hunter education certification, hunters must have a special mountain lion education certificate. CPW limits when, where, how many, and the way mountain lions can be hunted each year. All harvested lions must be inspected and tracked by CPW, and all edible meat must be prepared for human consumption. |

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**Table 1 (cont.)
Bobcats, Lynx, and Mountain Lions in Colorado**

| | Bobcats | Lynx | Mountain Lions |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Hunting statistics | From 2020 to 2023, an average of 880 bobcats were harvested per year. | There have been no reported kills of lynx in Colorado. | From 2020 to 2023, an average of 500 mountain lions were harvested per year. |

3 **How would this measure change reimbursements for big game damage?**

4 Under current law, Colorado may provide reimbursement to landowners for damage to
5 crops, fences, orchards, nurseries, personal property, or livestock caused by any “big game”
6 species, including mountain lions. Colorado does not provide reimbursement for damage
7 caused by lynx or bobcats. This measure would remove mountain lions from the definition of
8 big game, making landowners ineligible for state reimbursement for any damage caused by
9 a mountain lion.

For information on those issue committees that support or oppose the measures on the ballot at the November 5, 2024, election, go to the Colorado Secretary of State’s elections center web site hyperlink for ballot and initiative information:

<https://coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Initiatives/InitiativesHome.html>

10 **Arguments For Proposition 127**

- 11 1) Bobcat and mountain lion hunting causes the animals pain and trauma. The hunting of
12 mountain lions may involve the use of dog-chases, while the hunting of bobcats may
13 involve the use of baits, lures, or live traps. Hunting and trapping these animals, often for
14 trophies or the commercial fur trade, is an unnecessary practice.
- 15 2) Bobcat and mountain lion populations can naturally regulate themselves without the
16 need for hunting or trapping, and there is no consistent evidence that banning these
17 activities would create new dangers to the public. Big cats provide valuable ecological
18 contributions, and Colorado should protect them rather than allowing them to be
19 hunted. Where circumstances warrant it, federal, state, and local officials will still be
20 allowed to protect human life with lethal and non-lethal methods.

21 **Arguments Against Proposition 127**

- 22 1) The measure restricts the ability of wildlife management experts at CPW to make
23 science-based decisions to achieve the state’s ecological objectives, which include
24 preserving biodiversity, ensuring sustainable ecosystems, and protecting endangered
25 species. The state currently manages a healthy population of bobcats and mountain
26 lions, proving that its current management practices, which include regulated hunting,
27 are working. This measure undermines these objectives by disregarding the expertise
28 and research necessary for effective wildlife management. Furthermore, hunting lynx is
29 already illegal and the population is considered stable.

1 2) Hunting mountain lions and bobcats provides an important source of income to the
2 state wildlife management system and many local communities. Furthermore,
3 agricultural producers and landowners will lose the ability to be reimbursed for any
4 damage caused by a mountain lion. If a hunting ban results in an increased population of
5 mountain lions, these damages may become more frequent and costly for those
6 affected.

7 **Fiscal Impact of Proposition 127**

8 **State revenue.** The measure is anticipated to decrease state revenue to CPW in the
9 Department of Natural Resources by about \$410,000 through June 2025, and by about
10 \$450,000 per year thereafter. This revenue reduction is the result of the elimination of all
11 mountain lion hunting license sales, and some reduction of furbearer hunting license sales.
12 To the extent that prohibited killing occurs, the state may receive additional revenue from
13 fines or civil penalties.

14 **State spending.** The measure will decrease state expenditures in CPW by approximately
15 \$39,000 in FY 2024-25, and by \$77,500 in FY 2025-26 and in future years. This is the result of
16 a decrease in game damage claims paid to livestock owners when livestock is damaged by a
17 mountain lion. In addition, state expenditures will increase by approximately \$57,000 in
18 FY 2024-25 and \$115,218 in FY 2025-26 in the Department of Law to provide general
19 counsel to CPW. This is required to create new rules and regulations needed to conform with
20 the requirements of this measure. In total, the measure increases state expenditures in CPW
21 by about \$22,000 in FY 2024-25 and about \$44,000 in FY 2025-26.