

Initiative 302: Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish

Placed on the ballot by citizen initiative • Passes with 55 percent of the vote

Initiative 302 proposes amending the Colorado Constitution to:

- establish a right to fish and hunt certain wildlife; and
- create a policy that states hunting and fishing are the preferred means of managing fish and wildlife populations in Colorado.

What Your Vote Means

YES

A “yes” vote on Initiative 302 establishes a state constitutional right to hunt and fish.

NO

A “no” vote on Initiative 302 means that hunting and fishing will continue to be regulated by existing state and federal law.

Summary and Analysis of Initiative 302

What does Initiative 302 do, and will it change existing law?

Initiative 302 establishes a right in the Colorado Constitution to fish and hunt certain wildlife. The right applies to traditional hunting and fishing methods. It does not apply to nongame species, endangered species, or any species that is illegal to hunt under federal law. Nothing in the measure changes existing laws related to trespassing on private property, or limits the authority of the state to regulate hunting, fishing, and wildlife management if necessary for sound scientific reasons, public safety, or to preserve future hunting and fishing opportunities.

How does Colorado currently manage and regulate fish and wildlife?

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife management in Colorado and administers regulations for hunting and fishing, as adopted by the CPW Commission, a Governor-appointed board. State law requires wildlife and their environment to be protected, preserved, enhanced, and managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people and visitors of Colorado.

Existing regulations address where and when hunting and fishing can occur, license and permit requirements, methods and materials for hunters and anglers, and limits on how many animals can be hunted or fished. Hunting and fishing regulations are generally guided by wildlife and fish population numbers, species and habitat management plans, and recreational opportunities and needs.

Which species are affected by the measure?

The initiative applies to certain fish and game species managed by CPW. It does not apply to nongame species, endangered species, or species that are illegal to hunt under federal law. Species currently allowed to be hunted in Colorado include certain big game animals, birds, furbearing animals, and other small game animals. Big game animals include bears, bighorn sheep, deer, elk, moose, mountain goats, mountain lions, and pronghorns. The hunting or possession of most nongame fish and wildlife species, including those classified as threatened or endangered, is prohibited in Colorado. Examples of species that are illegal to hunt under federal law include those that are threatened or endangered, as well as certain migratory birds.

Argument For Initiative 302

- 1) Hunting and fishing are a part of Colorado's heritage and cultural identity and are important to its economy. Colorado should join the other 24 states that constitutionally protect the right to hunt and fish. Hunting and fishing benefit all areas of the state, and sales from hunting and fishing licenses contribute over \$100 million annually to Colorado's economy.

Argument Against Initiative 302

- 1) Colorado is already a leader in wildlife conservation and management. Enshrining a right to hunt and fish in the Colorado Constitution is unnecessary and could impede the state's ability to effectively manage fish and wildlife. The state constitution should protect fundamental rights and not recreational activities.

Information about the organizations supporting and opposing this measure is available on the Colorado Secretary of State's website:

www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Initiatives/ballot/contacts/2026.html

Fiscal Impact of Initiative 302

The fiscal impact will be included in the second draft.