First Regular Session Seventy-fourth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 23-0278.01 Richard Sweetman x4333

SENATE BILL 23-103

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Baisley, Rich

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Lynch, Taggart, Weinberg

Senate Committees

House Committees

Judiciary

	A BILL FOR AN ACT
101	CONCERNING THE LIABILITY OF OWNERS OF PRIVATE LAND FOR
102	DAMAGES THAT ARE INCURRED BY PERSONS WHO ACCESS THE
103	PRIVATE LAND FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

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://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill amends the Colorado recreational use statute (CRUS).

Section 1 of the bill amends the stated purposes of the CRUS.

Section 2 amends definitions of terms and adds a definition of the term "inherent dangers or risks".

Section 3 changes the conditions under which the CRUS limits a

landowner's (owner's) liability for damages that occur as a result of other persons' use of the owner's land for recreational purposes. Section 3 also repeals limitations on the total amount of damages that may be recovered from a private landowner that leases land to a public entity for recreational purposes or that grants an easement or other right to use land to a public entity for recreational purposes. In place of these limitations, the bill substitutes language stating that, except as otherwise agreed by a public entity and an owner, an owner is not liable for losses resulting from a public entity's management, or failure to provide adequate management, of land that is used for recreational purposes. Section 3 also removes unused and redundant definitions of terms.

Section 4 amends several exceptions that describe circumstances under which the CRUS does not limit an owner's liability. Specifically:

- The CRUS allows an owner to be found liable for "willful or malicious" failure to guard or warn against a known dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity likely to cause "harm". **Section 4** limits this exception to apply only to malicious failures and amends the exception to apply to a known dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity likely to cause "harm or death".
- The CRUS includes an exception in cases in which an owner imposes a charge upon a person who goes on the land for recreational purposes. **Section 4** removes certain language from this exception that is redundant with language that appears elsewhere in the CRUS.
- The CRUS includes an exception concerning attractive nuisances. Section 4 provides that if a property used for public recreational purposes contains active or inactive agricultural operations; active or inactive mining operations, gravel operations, or other mineral and energy development; or certain water structures, neither the property nor the agricultural operations, nor the mining or gravel operations or other development, nor the water or water structures constitute an attractive nuisance.
- The CRUS allows an owner to be held liable for injury received on land incidental to the use of land on which a commercial or business enterprise of any description is being carried on. However, when land is leased to a public entity for recreational purposes or a public entity has been granted an easement or other right to use land for recreational purposes, the land is not considered to be land upon which a business or commercial enterprise is being carried on. Section 4 removes this qualification from the exception.

Section 5 relocates language stating that the CRUS does not limit

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the protections afforded to an owner under Colorado's premises liability statute. **Section 5** also states that nothing in the CRUS creates a prescriptive easement on private land where an owner has acquiesced to public use of existing trails that have historically been used by the public for recreational purposes.

Current law allows the prevailing party in any civil action brought by a recreational user for damages against a landowner who allows the use of the landowner's property for public recreational purposes to recover the costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court. **Section 6** states that in the event that an action is commenced by any party, the prevailing party is entitled to recover all fees, costs, and expenses, including fees and expenses of attorneys and experts and fees and expenses associated with appeals of the court's decision.

Section 7 states that nothing in the CRUS may be construed to limit the authority of an owner to:

- Determine any or all of the recreational purposes that are allowed on the owner's land;
- Identify areas of the land where recreational purposes are allowed or not allowed; or
- Restrict persons from engaging in recreational purposes on the owner's land.

Section 7 also describes means by which an owner who elects to take any of these actions may provide notice to the public of such actions. **Section 7** also states that except as otherwise provided in the CRUS:

- An owner owes no duty of care to keep the owner's premises safe for entry by other persons for recreational purposes or to give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity on the premises to persons entering the land for such purposes; and
- Neither the installation of a sign or other form of warning of a dangerous condition, nor the failure to maintain or keep in place any sign or other warning, nor the failure to make any modification to improve safety creates any liability on the part of an owner when there is no other basis for liability.
- 1 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:
- 2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **amend** 33-41-101 as
- 3 follows:
- 4 **33-41-101.** Legislative declaration. (1) The purpose PURPOSES

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1	of this article is ARTICLE 41 ARE to:
2	(a) PROMOTE A STATE POLICY OF RESPONSIBILITY BY BOTH
3	OWNERS OF LAND AND PERSONS WHO USE PRIVATE LAND FOR
4	RECREATIONAL PURPOSES; AND
5	(b) Encourage owners of land to make land and water areas
6	available for recreational purposes by limiting their OWNERS' liability.
7	toward persons entering thereon for such purposes.
8	SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 33-41-102 as
9	follows:
10	33-41-102. Definitions. As used in this article ARTICLE 41, unless
11	the context otherwise requires:
12	(1) "Charge" means a consideration paid IN EXCHANGE for entry
13	upon or use of the land or any facilities thereon ON or adjacent thereto TO
14	LAND; except that, in a case of IF land IS leased to a public entity or in
15	which a public entity has been granted an easement or other rights RIGHT
16	to use land for recreational purposes, any consideration received by the
17	owner for such A lease, easement, or other right shall IS not be deemed a
18	charge, within the meaning of this article nor shall IS any consideration
19	received by an owner from any federal governmental agency for the
20	purposes PURPOSE of admitting any person constitute such a charge.
21	(2) "Inherent dangers or risks" means dangers or
22	CONDITIONS THAT ARE PART OF ANY RECREATIONAL PURPOSE, INCLUDING:
23	(a) CHANGING WEATHER CONDITIONS;
24	(b) Surface or subsurface conditions such as wildlife,
25	FOREST GROWTH, ROCKS, STUMPS, STREAMBEDS, CLIFFS, EXTREME
26	TERRAIN, AND TREES OR OTHER NATURAL OBJECTS;
27	(c) AGRICULTURAL OR MINING ACTIVITIES OR OPERATIONS:

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1	(a) SIGNS, POSTS, FENCES, AND ENCLOSURES;
2	(e) OTHER STRUCTURES AND THEIR COMPONENTS; AND
3	(f) DANGERS AND RISKS THAT RESULT FROM A PERSON ENGAGING
4	IN A RECREATIONAL PURPOSE BEYOND THE PERSON'S ABILITIES.
5	(2) (3) "Land" also means REAL PROPERTY AND INCLUDES roads,
6	water, watercourses, private ways, and buildings, structures, and
7	machinery, or AND equipment thereon, when THAT IS attached to OR
8	LOCATED UPON real property.
9	(3) (4) "Owner" includes: but is not limited to,
10	(a) The possessor of a fee interest;
11	(b) a tenant, lessee, occupant, the possessor of any other interest
12	in land, or Any person having a right to grant permission to use the
13	PRIVATE land;
14	(c) A PRIVATE LANDOWNER; or
15	(d) Any public entity as defined in the "Colorado Governmental
16	Immunity Act", article 10 of title 24, C.R.S., which THAT has an interest
17	in land.
18	(4) (5) "Person" includes:
19	(a) Any individual, regardless of age, maturity, or experience; or
20	(b) Members of an individual's family or extended family;
21	(c) A THIRD PARTY WHO HAS AN ACTIONABLE CLAIM UNDER LAW;
22	(d) Any corporation, government or governmental subdivision or
23	agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, or association; or
24	(e) Any other legal entity.
25	(4.5) (6) "Public entity" means: the same
26	(a) A PUBLIC ENTITY, as defined in section 24-10-103 (5); C.R.S.
27	OR

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1	(b) The federal government and any agency,
2	INSTRUMENTALITY, OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE FEDERAL
3	GOVERNMENT.
4	(5) (7) "Recreational purpose" includes, but is not limited to,
5	MEANS any sports HOBBY, DIVERSION, SPORT, or other recreational activity
6	of whatever nature undertaken by a person while using the PRIVATE land,
7	including ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams, paths, and trails appurtenant
8	thereto, of another and TO SUCH LAND. "RECREATIONAL PURPOSE"
9	includes but is not limited to, any hobby, diversion, or other sports or
10	other recreational activity such as: hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking,
11	hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bicycling,
12	riding or driving motorized recreational vehicles, swimming, tubing,
13	diving, spelunking, sightseeing, exploring, hang gliding, rock climbing,
14	kite flying, roller skating, bird watching, gold panning, target shooting,
15	ice skating, ice fishing, AND photography. or engaging in any other form
16	of sports or other recreational activity.
17	SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 33-41-103 as
18	follows:
19	33-41-103. Limitation on owner's liability - no liability for
20	management by public entity. (1) Subject to the provision of section
21	33-41-105, An owner of land who either directly or indirectly THAT
22	KNOWINGLY OR INTENTIONALLY invites or permits, without charge, any
23	person to use such property THE OWNER'S LAND for recreational purposes
24	does not thereby:
25	(a) Extend any assurance, IMPLIED OR EXPRESSED, that the
26	premises are LAND IS safe for any purpose AND FREE FROM ANY INHERENT
27	DANGERS OR RISKS;

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1	(b) Confer upon such THE person the legal status of an invitee or
2	licensee to whom a duty of care is owed;
3	(c) Assume responsibility or incur liability for any injury to person
4	or property, or for the death of any person, INCLUDING EMOTIONAL
5	DISTRESS, INCAPACITATION DUE TO INJURY, MEDICAL EXPENSES, OR PAIN
6	AND SUFFERING, WHICH INJURY OR DEATH WAS caused by an act or
7	omission of such THE person.
8	(2) (a) To the extent liability is found, notwithstanding subsection
9	(1) of this section, the total amount of damages that may be recovered
10	from a private landowner who leases land or a portion thereof to a public
11	entity for recreational purposes or who grants an easement or other rights
12	to use land or a portion thereof to a public entity for recreational purposes
13	for injuries resulting from the use of the land by invited guests for
14	recreational purposes shall be: In order to ensure the independence
15	OF PUBLIC ENTITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR RECREATIONAL
16	PROGRAMS AND TO PROTECT OWNERS OF LAND THAT IS USED FOR
17	RECREATIONAL PURPOSES FROM LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES RESULTING FROM
18	SUCH USE, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE AGREED TO BY A PUBLIC ENTITY AND AN
19	OWNER, AN OWNER IS NOT LIABLE FOR DAMAGES RESULTING FROM A
20	PUBLIC ENTITY'S MANAGEMENT, OR FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE
21	MANAGEMENT, OF LAND OR ANY PORTION OF LAND THAT IS USED FOR
22	RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.
23	(I) For any injury to one person in any single occurrence, the
24	amount specified in section 24-10-114 (1)(a)(I), C.R.S.;
25	(II) For an injury to two or more persons in any single occurrence,
26	the amount specified in section 24-10-114 (1)(a)(II), C.R.S.
27	(b) The limitations in this subsection (2) shall apply only when

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access to the property is limited, to the extent practicable, to invited guests, when the person injured is an invited guest of the public entity, when such use of the land by the injured person is for recreational purposes, and only during the term of such lease, easement, or other grant.

- (c) Nothing in this subsection (2) shall limit, enlarge, or otherwise affect the liability of a public entity.
- (d) In order to ensure the independence of public entities in the management of their recreational programs and to protect private landowners of land used for public recreational purposes from liability therefor, except as otherwise agreed by the public entity and a private landowner, a private landowner shall not be liable for a public entity's management of the land or portion thereof which is used for recreational purposes.
- (e) For purposes of this subsection (2) only, unless the context otherwise requires:
- (I) "Invited guests" means all persons or guests of persons present on the land for recreational purposes, at the invitation or consent of the public entity, and with or without permit or license to enter the land, and all persons present on the land at the invitation or consent of the public entity or the landowner for business or other purposes relating to or arising from the use of the land for recreational purposes if the public entity receives all of the revenues, if any, which are collected for entry onto the land. "Invited guests" does not include any such persons or guests of any person present on the land for recreational purposes at the invitation or consent of the public entity or the landowner if the landowner retains all or a portion of the revenue collected for entry onto

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the land or if the landowner shares the revenue collected for entry onto the land with the public entity. For the purposes of this subparagraph (I), "revenue collected for entry" does not include lease payments, lease-purchase payments, or rental payments.

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(II) "Land" means real property, or a body of water and the real property appurtenant thereto, or real property that was subject to mining operations under state or federal law and that has been abandoned or left in an inadequate reclamation status prior to August 3, 1977, for coal mining operations, or July 1, 1976, for hard rock mining operations, which is leased to a public entity or for which an easement or other right is granted to a public entity for recreational purposes or for which the landowner has acquiesced to public use of existing trails that have historically been used by the public for recreational purposes. "Land", as used in this subsection (2), does not include real property, buildings, or portions thereof which are not the subject of a lease, easement, or other right of use granted to a public entity; except that land on which a landowner has acquiesced to public use of existing trails that have historically been used by the public for recreational purposes need not be subject to a lease, easement, or other right of use granted to a public entity. Nothing in this subparagraph (II) shall be construed to create a prescriptive easement on lands on which a landowner has acquiesced to public use of existing trails that have historically been used by the public for recreational purposes. The incidental use of such private property for recreational purposes shall not establish or presume facts to support land use classification or zoning.

(II.5) "Lease" or "leased" includes a lease-purchase agreement containing an option to purchase the property. Any lease in which a

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private landowner leases land or a portion thereof to a public entity for
recreational purposes shall contain a disclosure advising the private
landowner of the right to bargain for indemnification from liability for
injury resulting from use of the land by invited guests for recreational
purposes.
(II.7) "Management" means the entire range of activities, whether
undertaken or not by the public entity, associated with controlling,
directing, allowing, and administering the use, operation, protection,
development, repair, and maintenance of private land for public
recreational purposes.
(III) "Recreational purposes" includes, but is not limited to, any
sports or other recreational activity of whatever nature undertaken by an
invited guest while using the land, including ponds, lakes, reservoirs,
streams, paths, and trails appurtenant to, of another and includes, but is
not limited to, any hobby, diversion, or other sports or other recreational
activity such as: Fishing, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding,
snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bicycling, swimming, tubing, diving,
sight-seeing, exploring, kite flying, bird watching, gold panning, ice
skating, ice fishing, photography, or engaging in any other form of sports
or other recreational activity, as well as any activities related to such
sports or recreational activities, and any activities directly or indirectly
resulting from such sports or recreational activity.
(f) Nothing in this subsection (2) shall limit the protections
provided, as applicable, to a landowner under section 13-21-115, C.R.S.
SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 33-41-104 as
follows:

33-41-104. When liability is not limited. (1) Nothing in this

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article ARTICLE 41 limits in any way any liability which THAT would otherwise exist:

- (a) For willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against a known dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity likely to cause harm OR DEATH;
- (b) For injury suffered by any person in any case where the IN WHICH AN owner of land charges the IMPOSES A CHARGE UPON A person who enters or goes on the land for the A recreational use thereof; except that, in case of land leased to a public entity or in which a public entity has been granted an easement or other rights to use land for recreational purposes any consideration received by the owner for such lease, easement, or other right shall not be deemed a charge within the meaning of this article nor shall any consideration received by an owner from any federal governmental agency for the purpose of admitting any person constitute such a charge PURPOSE;
- (c) For maintaining an attractive nuisance; except that, if the property used for public recreational purposes contains ACTIVE OR INACTIVE AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS; ACTIVE OR INACTIVE mining OPERATIONS, GRAVEL operations, that were abandoned or left in an inadequate reclamation status as provided in section 33-41-103 (2)(e)(II) or was constructed or is OR OTHER MINERAL AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT; OR WATER STRUCTURES used for or in connection with the diversion, storage, conveyance, or use of water, NEITHER the property and NOR the water or abandoned AGRICULTURAL, mining, GRAVEL OR OTHER operations, NOR ANY OTHER MINERAL AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT, NOR SUCH WATER OR WATER STRUCTURES within such THE property shall not constitute an attractive nuisance;

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(d) For injury received on land incidental to the use of land on
which a AN ACTIVE commercial or business enterprise of any description
is being carried on; except that in the case of land leased to a public entity
for recreational purposes or in which a public entity has been granted an
easement or other rights to use land for recreational purposes, such land
shall not be considered to be land upon which a business or commercial
enterprise is being carried on EXISTS.
SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 33-41-105 as
follows:
33-41-105. Article not to create liability or relieve obligation.
(1) Nothing in this article ARTICLE 41 shall be construed to:
(a) Create, enlarge, or affect in any manner any liability for willful
or malicious failure to guard or warn against a known dangerous
condition, use, structure, or activity likely to cause harm OR DEATH, or for
injury OR DEATH suffered by any person in any case where the owner of
land charges IMPOSES A CHARGE for that person to enter or go on the land
for the A recreational use thereof PURPOSE;
(b) Relieve any person using the land of another for recreational
purposes from any obligation which he THE PERSON may have in the
absence of this article ARTICLE 41 to exercise care in his THE use of such
land and in his the Person's activities thereon on the LAND or from the
legal consequences of failure to employ such care;
(c) Limit any liability of any owner to any person for damages
resulting from any occurrence which THAT took place prior to BEFORE
January 1, 1970;
(d) Limit the protections afforded to an owner pursuant
TO SECTION 13-21-115; OR

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1	(e) CREATE A PRESCRIPTIVE EASEMENT ON PRIVATE LAND WHERE
2	AN OWNER HAS ACQUIESCED TO PUBLIC USE OF EXISTING TRAILS THAT
3	HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN USED BY THE PUBLIC FOR RECREATIONAL
4	PURPOSES. THE INCIDENTAL USE OF SUCH PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR
5	RECREATIONAL PURPOSES DOES NOT ESTABLISH FACTS TO SUPPORT LAND
6	USE OR ZONING DECISIONS BY A LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO GRANT ANY
7	PRESCRIPTIVE EASEMENTS.
8	SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 33-41-105.5
9	as follows:
10	33-41-105.5. Prevailing party - attorney fees, costs, and
11	expenses. In the event that an action concerning the
12	APPLICABILITY OF THIS ARTICLE 41 IS COMMENCED BY ANY PARTY, the
13	prevailing party in any civil action by a recreational user for damages
14	against a landowner who allows the use of the landowner's property for
15	public recreational purposes shall IS ENTITLED TO recover the FROM THE
16	LOSING PARTY ALL FEES, costs, of the action together with reasonable
17	attorney fees as determined by the court AND EXPENSES, INCLUDING
18	WITHOUT LIMITATION ALL FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES OF ATTORNEYS AND
19	EXPERTS AND ALL FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH APPEALS
20	OF THE COURT'S DECISION.
21	SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 33-41-107 as
22	follows:
23	33-41-107. Determination of permissive uses and limitations
24	- forms of notification - no liability created by notification.
25	(1) Nothing in this article 41 may be construed to limit the
26	AUTHORITY OF AN OWNER TO:
27	(a) DETERMINE ANY OR ALL OF THE RECREATIONAL PURPOSES

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1	THAT ARE ALLOWED ON THE OWNER'S LAND;
2	(b) Identify areas of the land where recreational
3	PURPOSES ARE ALLOWED OR NOT ALLOWED; OR
4	(c) RESTRICT PERSONS FROM ENGAGING IN RECREATIONAL
5	PURPOSES ON THE OWNER'S LAND.
6	(2) An owner who elects to take any of the actions
7	DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION MAY PROVIDE NOTICE TO
8	THE PUBLIC OF SUCH ACTIONS BY:
9	(a) Posting one or more signs at the most identifiable
10	TRAILHEAD OR OTHER PRIMARY ENTRANCE TO THE LAND;
11	(b) Posting notices in one or more local newspapers;
12	(c) NOTIFYING THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE WITHIN THE
13	FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THE BUREAU OF LAND
14	MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OR
15	THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE CREATED IN SECTION 33-9-104.
16	(3) EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS ARTICLE 41:
17	(a) An owner owes no duty of care to keep the owner's
18	PREMISES SAFE FOR ENTRY BY OTHER PERSONS FOR RECREATIONAL
19	PURPOSES OR TO GIVE ANY WARNING OF A DANGEROUS CONDITION, USE,
20	STRUCTURE, OR ACTIVITY ON THE PREMISES TO PERSONS ENTERING THE
21	LAND FOR SUCH PURPOSES; AND
22	(b) NEITHER THE INSTALLATION OF A SIGN OR OTHER FORM OF
23	WARNING OF A DANGEROUS CONDITION, NOR THE FAILURE TO MAINTAIN
24	OR KEEP IN PLACE ANY SIGN OR OTHER WARNING, NOR THE FAILURE TO
25	MAKE ANY MODIFICATION TO IMPROVE SAFETY CREATES ANY LIABILITY ON
26	THE PART OF AN OWNER WHEN THERE IS NO OTHER BASIS FOR LIABILITY.
27	SECTION 8. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act

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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; 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 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the

official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

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