

House Finance

04/07/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1292 Transmission Lines in State Highway Rights-of-Way

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Brien Webster For Conservation Colorado	<p>Testimony in Support of HB25-1292: Transmission Lines in State Highway Rights-of-Way</p> <p>Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB25-1292, a crucial bill that will facilitate Colorado's transition to a clean energy future while minimizing environmental and community impacts.</p> <p>My name is Brien Webster, I live in Grand Junction and I am the Public Lands Campaign Manager for Conservation Colorado. Today, I am writing to advocate for a policy shift that aligns with our state's ambitious climate goals and prioritizes responsible infrastructure development. Colorado faces a critical need to expand its electric transmission infrastructure to meet the growing demand for renewable energy and achieve our 2050 carbon reduction targets. The current prohibition against co-locating overhead transmission lines along interstate highways significantly hinders this expansion and forces us to consider less desirable alternatives.</p> <p>The necessity of co-location, as outlined in this bill, stems from the numerous benefits it provides, most notably the reduction of environmental impact. By placing transmission lines within existing highway rights-of-way, we minimize habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss compared to the development of new lines across greenfield areas. This approach also facilitates efficient infrastructure expansion, streamlining the permitting process and accelerating the deployment of essential transmission infrastructure.</p> <p>Recognizing the critical importance of avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potential impacts on communities, alongside wildlife, HB25-1292 incorporates several key provisions to ensure responsible implementation. The bill mandates consultation with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to assess and mitigate impacts on wildlife habitats and migratory corridors. Crucially, it also places a strong emphasis on environmental justice, requiring careful consideration and mitigation of impacts on disproportionately impacted communities. Furthermore, the legislation establishes a tiered approach to siting, prioritizing existing utility corridors and highway rights-of-way to minimize the need for new development, which often has significant community and environmental consequences.</p>

	<p>Finally, the bill includes detailed reporting requirements, compelling developers to outline comprehensive mitigation strategies for both community and environmental impacts, thus ensuring a thorough and responsible development process.</p> <p>HB25-1292 represents a balanced approach that addresses Colorado's energy needs while safeguarding our environment and communities. By removing the existing policy barriers and establishing a clear framework for co-location, we can accelerate our clean energy transition and ensure a sustainable future for our state.</p> <p>I urge this committee to support HB25-1292.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Brien Webster, Public Lands Campaign Manager, Conservation Colorado</p>
--	--