

House Bill 16-1010 Priola and Sonnenberg**Bill Summary:****Changes:**

- Requires notification of “translocation” of rodent pests to Conservation Districts where animals will be released.
- Requires all translocation of rodent pests, cross county lines, as well as within county movements, be approved by County Commissioners.
  - Ensures Conservation District notification

**Reasons:****Event inspiring the change to current law**

- Eastern Adams County Conservation District became aware of translocation only because
  - Transfer being performed by a professional organization
  - Transfer occurring across county lines and therefor went through the County Commissioner
  - Not directly notified
- Investigation at the site determined that the site was under Conservation District Contract
  - Apparent that prairie dogs had occupied property for an extended period of time
- CRP contracts require control of “pest and undesirable species”
- CRS 35-7-101. Legislative declaration “Whereas, in many large areas of this state certain destructive rodent pests,...prairie dogs ...have become so numerous and such a grave and immediate menace to the agricultural, horticultural, and livestock industries of the state....”
- CRP contract cancelled and property owner had to return \$10,000 in payments to Conservation District

**Change requests are coming directly from Conservation Districts**

- Allows conservation districts notification of not just cross county rodents transfer but also monitor movements within the county
  - Studies and land surveys can then be performed ahead of time instead of after damage has occurred
  - Ensures Conservation District lands be maintained and protected
- The Eastern Adams County Conservation District was only notified because the transfer occurred across county lines and therefore had to be approved by the County commissioner
  - Even then, the Conservation District was not directly notified

Dorie J Vickrey  
2955 S County Road 149  
Strasburg CO 80136

Rep. Kevin Priola  
200 E Colfax Ave  
Room 322  
Denver CO 80203

March 2, 2016

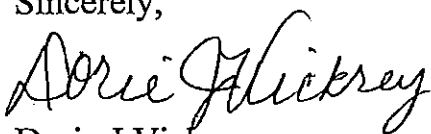
Representative Priola,

Thank you for introducing House Bill 1010 regarding notification of prairie dog relocation. I believe this is a great bill and should go forward. I'm tired of having prairie dogs dumped in rural areas, and we that work the land have to deal with the destruction these rodents cause. Prairie dogs are unwanted "guests" to farmers and ranchers and we are stuck with the time and financial burden to keep them under control.

The parties opposed to this bill should step up and offer to have the prairie dogs relocated to their golf courses, parkways, and their own homes. They can enjoy all the benefits prairie dogs have to offer.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Dorie J Vickrey

# Ness Farms

Dale and Cynthia Ness  
71980 East 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Byers, Colorado 80103

February 24, 2016

RE: HB 16-1010

Dear Representative Priola, and Committee Members:

## WE SUPPORT HB 16-1010

We wish to thank you for your attention to HB 16-1010. If passed, this bill will give a voice to the people in which the prairie dog re-location will most affect. We think that you will agree that people, who live in an area, whether urban or rural, should be able to have a say on what is brought into their community. The re-location of prairie dogs to an area where agriculture, (growing crops and livestock) is a way of life is a detriment to the source of revenue for the local ranchers and farmers. I am sure that you are aware that these animals make burrows that are potential hazards to all types of livestock. They carry fleas, which in turn carry diseases that harm people, family pets as well as working canine dogs. The prairie dogs also attract other hazards such as venomous snakes that are dangerous to human and animals. The prairie dog can also destroy growing crops such as wheat or corn, and any other crop in the vicinity of the prairie dog town. They eat all greenery leaving ground open for erosion. They travel many miles making it impossible to contain. Allowing someone to re-locate these rodents lines their pockets, but takes many thousands of dollars out of the rural economy in the area they are brought into. Please pass HB 16-1010.

Thank you,

Dale and Cynthia Ness



Kevin Priola &lt;kpriola@gmail.com&gt;

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**Prairie dog relocation**

1 message

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**Brian Ferris** <ferrisranch@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 23, 2016 at 11:00 AM

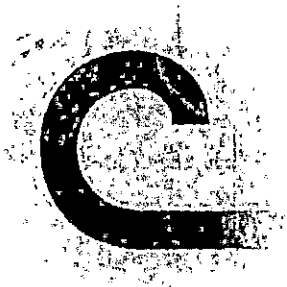
To: "kpriola@gmail.com" &lt;kpriola@gmail.com&gt;

Representative Priola, I am writing you to express my concern about the lack of process regarding prairie dog relocations. I represent roughly 9000 acres of "vacant" land in the Leader area where a relocation commenced in 2015. I was shocked to learn how easy it was to be granted permits to relocate prairie dogs. The bar is set so incredibly low that an approval is virtually guaranteed with complete disregard to a realistic recognition of the footprint of the animals. A meaningless 1/4 mile buffer was offered when the true range of a prairie dog is over 20 miles. Prairie dogs also are known to carry bubonic plague and there is an increase in the populations of black widow spiders and rattlesnakes in and around the prairie dog towns.

While I think there is much better uses of time, money and energy I respect that some people wish to pursue this. Given the fact that people, kids, dogs, livestock, ect coexist poorly with bubonic plague and poisonous creatures, there should be a process that allows the neighbors input on something that will negatively affect them (including the value of their property).

Surely, given the divisive nature of this subject, there is ample reason to make sure the relocations are done in a place that makes sense rather than shoehorned into a neighborhood where they are a poor fit by an environmental opportunist.

Brian Ferris  
4828 Road K  
Wiggins, CO 80654  
970 768 1175



## UPPER SOUTH PLATTE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

June 17, 2015

This is intended to be a statement of position on the subject of relocating prairie dogs or other destructive rodents within the Upper South Platte Watershed. It may be distributed and used as its bearer sees fit to further that position.

To Whom it may Concern,

The Upper South Platte Watershed Association, on behalf of the landowners and producers in our fifteen Conservation Districts in Colorado, wishes to express our concern about the transporting, relocating or release of prairie dogs or other destructive rodents either within or between counties, specifically in agricultural areas.

As the threat of these rodents to agricultural land is well understood and acknowledged, we would like to request the following:

- Expansion of C.R.S. 35-7-203 requirements for County Commission hearings to include rodents released into the county from which they were taken. Crs 35 pg 77 rodent control
- Specification of the process and time required for notification of County Commission hearings concerning release of rodents.
- Requirement that Conservation Districts within receiving counties be notified of upcoming hearings in time for notification of their constituents.
- Including the Conservation Districts within the receiving counties as signers in the review process to insure the protection of crops as well as soil health.
- That the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife expand their requirements for granting permission for rodent relocation to include consideration of damage to agricultural or other land intended to receive released rodents.

The Upper South Platte Watershed Association represents fifteen Conservation Districts and covers 2600 square miles in north central Colorado. We include parts or all of eight counties and five Congressional Districts. Our goal is to promote conservation practices among our agricultural producers and land owners and to represent their concerns to local, county, district and state policy makers. While we acknowledge the prairie dog in its natural population numbers as a part of the natural ecosystem in our area, we believe that over population caused by relocation from urban areas causes many problems and needs to be controlled.

As soil health is a major concern among Conservation Districts, the wind and water erosion that results from the de-vegetation of rodent infested land and the de-stabilization of the affected soils are serious issues that need to be considered and addressed before any rodents are moved. This, along with well-known factors such as crop destruction, physical danger to livestock posed by rodent dens, the spread of disease, and the economic hardship on neighbors as they work to control the rodents that spread to their land, has prompted us to take this stand and ask for support in changing current requirements or lack thereof in an effort to promote conservation based stewardship of our land.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters, and for your continued support of natural resource conservation issues faced by our state in general and in the Upper South Platte Watershed in particular.

Sincerely,

Bob Hastings

USPWA President per action taken at the general meeting held on June 16, 2015.

USPWA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Agate – Big Thompson – Boulder Valley – Deer Trail – Douglas County - East Adams – Fort Collins – Jefferson  
Kiowa – Longmont – Platte Valley – Southeast Weld – West Adams – West Arapahoe – West Greeley

**Prairie Dog Relocation**

CAOD supports and promotes policy that public notifications, regulations and requirements be met for the relocation of all prairie dogs onto or near agricultural or rural residential and whether within or from outside of county boundaries.

1

**Submitted By: Deel, Trail, CD, East Adams, CD, West Arapahoe, CD**

**Committee Action: Approved as Amended**

**Membership Action: Passed**

## How many prairie dogs are there in Colorado?

2002 – a line intercept survey found the area occupied by black tailed prairie dogs:

255,398ha = 982 mi<sup>2</sup> = 638,495 acres of active colonies in Colorado

Aug 2006 – March 2007 Management and Conservation Article Eric A ODELL,  
Frances M Pusateri, Gary C. White...

flight limited to unoccupied rural areas – 22,369,280 acres

“estimates of occupied acreage should be considered a minimum estimate within  
Colorado”

Found:

329,529ha active = 1272mi<sup>2</sup> = **813,793 acres of active prairie dog colonies**

42422ha = 164mi<sup>2</sup> = 106,055 acres of inactive prairie dog colonies

Ground truth 1 of every 10 recorded colony intercepts 189 colonies were tagged for ground truthing, only had access to 150 colonies due to property owners denying access.

Intended to ground truth <60 days, weather of winter for 2006, increased ground truth survey to 231 days for some of the colonies.

Even with the increase in inactive colonies found after the snow cleared, it was still found that prairie dog colonies occupied 29% more acres or 175,298 more acres of habitat than in 2002, so even if there has been a 5% decrease in acres of prairie dog habitat, we are still 20% above acres from 2002.

No data on inactive colonies from White et al. so no comparison.

Black Tailed Prairie Dogs:

US Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species of the Mountain-Prairie Region:

**2-18 burrows/acre**

Oklahoma Cooperative Extensive NREM-9014 quotes **4-100 burrows/acre**

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/98/burrow/pdog.html>:

As many as 26 prairie dogs sometimes live in one coterie , ~1 coterie/acre

**813,793 acres of active prairie dog burrows x 26 prairie dogs/coterie = 21,158,618 prairie dogs in Colorado**

Title of Resolution: Regulation of Prairie Dog relocation

District Submitting: Deer Trail, East Adams, and West Arapahoe

Resolution is: (check one)

Policy Amendment	_____	Identify related section of Policy Book _____
New Policy	<u>  X  </u>	Identify section of Policy Book to insert new policy
Action Item	_____	Identify related section of Policy Book if applicable

If resolution is **new policy** PLEASE identify specific section of CACD Policy Book it should be included:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Background on Resolution:** Recently, Prairie Dogs have been transplanted onto or near productive agricultural land from urban areas. While there are requirements for public hearings and county approval prior to moving these animals between counties, none exist for those being moved within a county. The Division of Parks and Wildlife is the sole decision maker for moving Prairie Dogs from urban development projects to agricultural land within the same county. Encroachment onto rural residential land is also a concern. DPW makes their decisions based solely on the effect of the move on the animals with no input from conservation groups or the agricultural neighbors who are being adversely affected by the introduction of larger than natural concentrations of the rodents. Individuals and businesses as well as governmental entities have taken advantage of this lack of regulation to move Prairie Dogs from urban development projects to land within the same county without any public notification or input from those most affected.

**Resolution:** CACD supports and promotes policy that equal public notifications, regulations and requirements be met for the transplant of all Prairie Dogs onto or near agricultural or rural residential land whether within or from outside county boundaries.

Contact information for person/conservation district submitting resolution:

Name: Bob Hastings \_\_\_\_\_

Email: eclecticct@aol.com \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: 303 888-6484 \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 9/15/2015 \_\_\_\_\_

**ELBERT COUNTY COLORADO**  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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September 23, 2015

Upper South Platte Watershed Association  
Attn: Bob Hastings, President  
Email: eclecticct@aol.com

**VIA E-MAIL ONLY**

RE: Letter of Support for proposed legislation controlling in-county destructive rodent pest transfers

Dear Mr. Hastings:

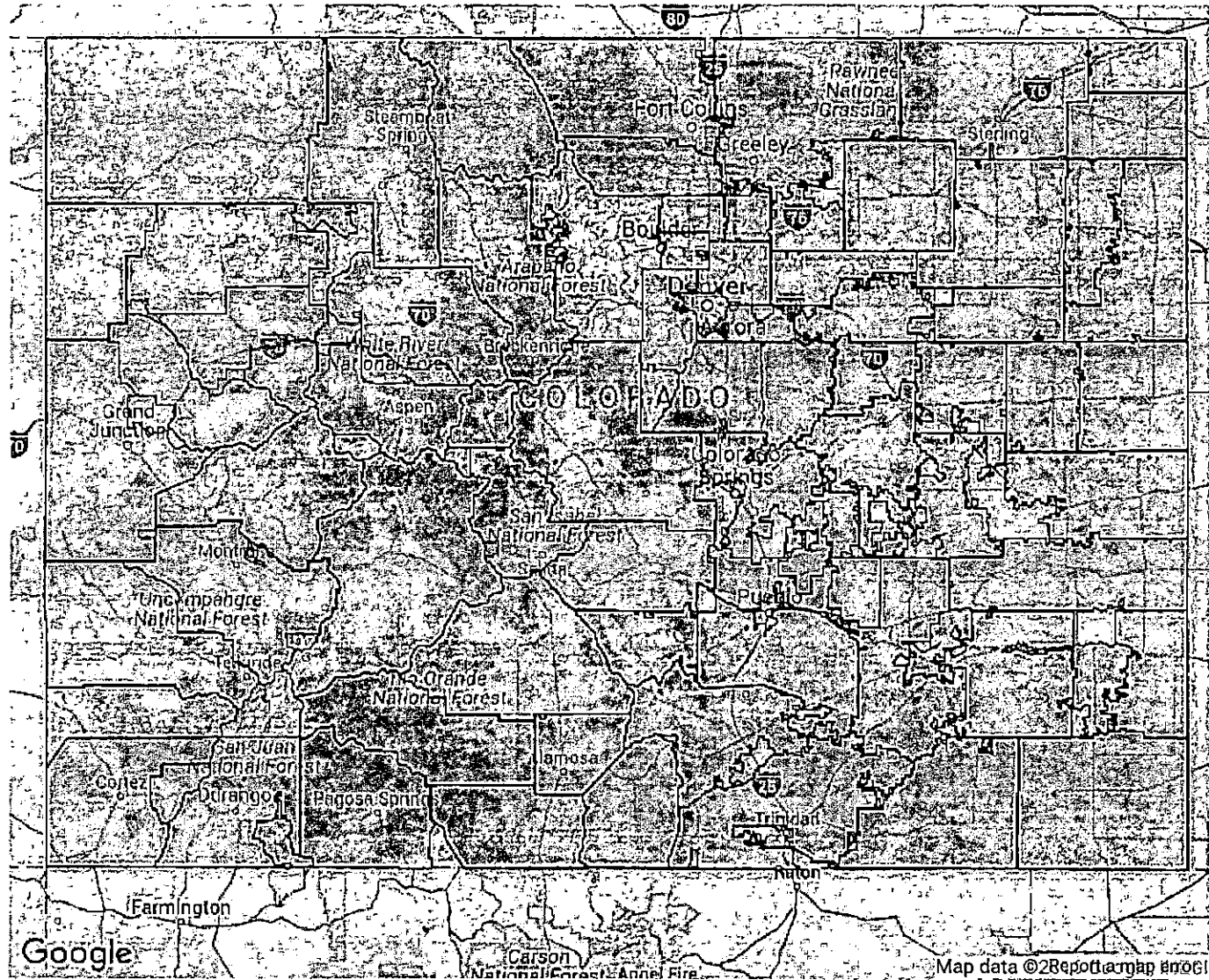
The Board of County Commissioners of Elbert County has been informed of proposed legislation to expand the requirements of C.R.S. 35-7-203, in order to provide for county commissioners to receive notice and conduct hearings concerning the in-county release of destructive rodent pests.

Please be advised that the Board of County Commissioners of Elbert County concurs with and strongly supports this proposed legislation. We believe that this proposed legislation will protect the rights of all Elbert County landowners by providing them with a local process to voice their position in any destructive rodent pest relocation decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Rowland". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a long horizontal tail.

Robert Rowland  
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners



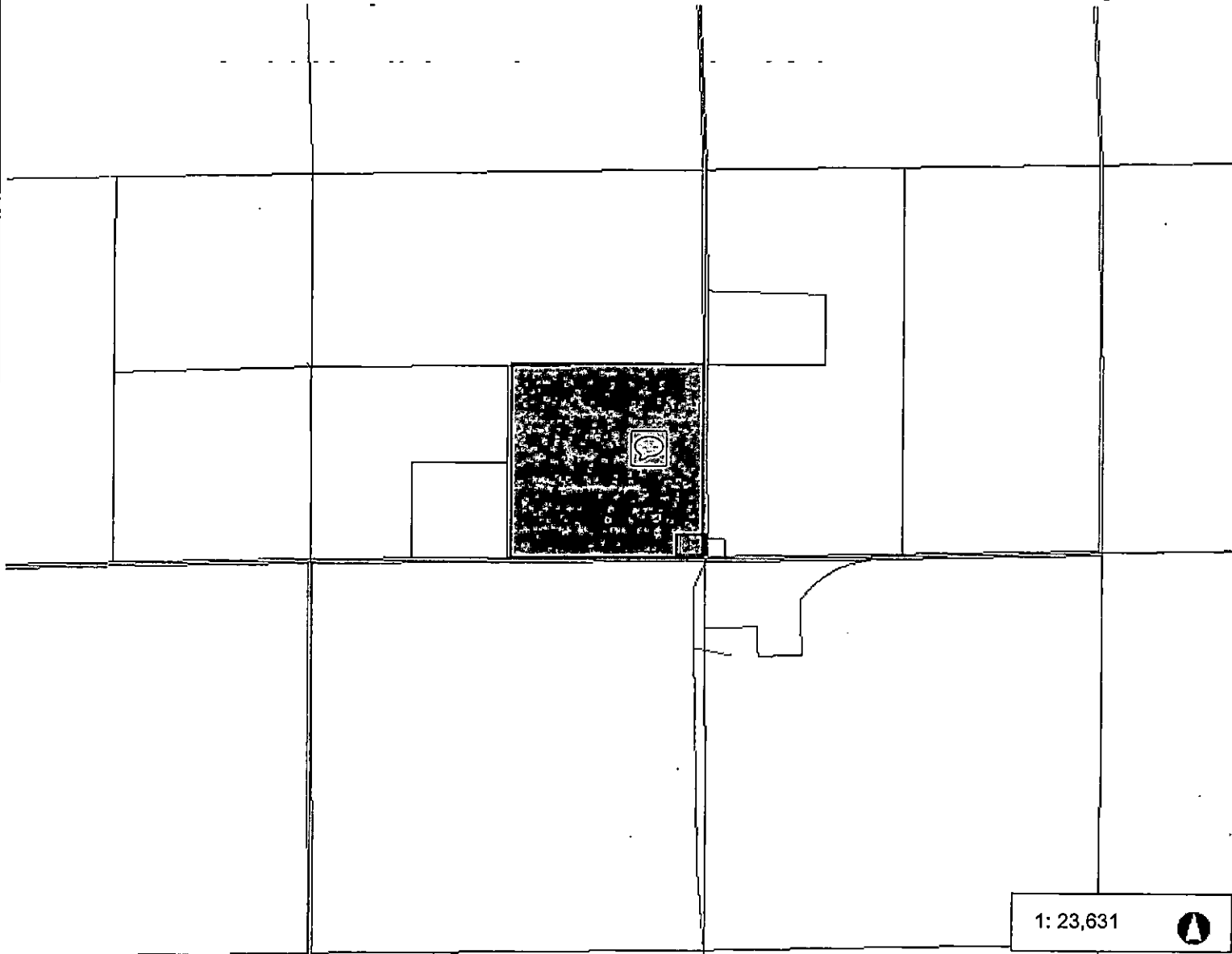
Tweet

0 0

Like

G+1

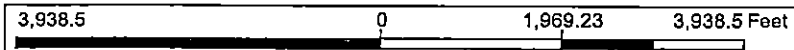
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**Legend**

- Parks and Open Space**
  - Open Land
  - Park Land
- Highways**
  - Highways (< 20,000)**
    - Interstate
    - Highway
    - Tollway
- Streets**
  - Streets (20,000 - 50,000)**
    - Streets
    - Ramp
- Parcels
- County Boundary
- City**
  - Arvada
  - Aurora
  - Bennett
  - Brighton
  - Commerce City
  - Federal Heights
  - Lochbule
  - Northglenn
  - Thornton
  - Westminster

1: 23,631



NAD\_1983\_StatePlane\_Colorado\_Central\_FIPS\_0502\_Feet  
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**Notes**