



February 25, 2026

**RE: Written Testimony in Support of HB26-1132  
House Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources Committee**

Chair McCormick and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole Bopp and I serve as Executive Director of Denver Audubon. Founded in 1969, Denver Audubon is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire actions that protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through education, conservation, and research. Our vision is to make Denver the most bird friendly city in the United States.

I am writing to respectfully ask you to vote in support of HB26-1132.

Denver Audubon's strategic framework is grounded in a simple but powerful truth: birds are essential to our ecosystems, and conserving them protects the balance of nature and the health of our communities. When we protect birds, we improve the well being of all living beings, including people.

Native plants are foundational to that work. They form the base of the food web that birds and pollinators depend on. Without native plants and the insects that co evolved with them, many bird species cannot successfully raise their young. At the same time, native plant landscapes conserve water, reduce long term maintenance costs, limit carbon emissions from mowing and landscaping equipment, and create healthier outdoor spaces for Colorado families.

Pollinators are also in significant decline. Studies in Colorado have documented steep decreases in insect populations, even in protected areas. These losses threaten agricultural productivity, wildlife habitat, ecosystem resilience, and the quality of life that draws people to our state. Pollinators contribute billions of dollars to Colorado agriculture and play an essential role in sustaining the landscapes that support recreation, tourism, and community well being.

HB26-1132 takes a thoughtful and practical approach by focusing on state managed lands. By coordinating native plant use and leveraging state purchasing power, Colorado can lead by example in creating resilient, water wise, wildlife supportive landscapes. This bill promotes ecological health while also supporting long term fiscal responsibility.

As an organization working every day to protect and restore urban and regional bird habitats, Denver Audubon sees firsthand how habitat quality directly affects birds and the communities who enjoy and benefit from them. This legislation aligns with our commitment to science based conservation, collaboration, and building a bird friendly future for Colorado.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to vote yes on HB26-1132 and advance this bill to the full House for debate. Thank you for your service to our state and for your consideration.

Nicole Bopp  
Executive Director  
Denver Audubon  
11280 Waterton Road  
Littleton, CO 80125

House Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources Committee  
RE: Support for HB26-1132 – Practices to Support Pollinators  
2/25/2026

Dear Chairperson McCormick, Vice Chair Mauro, and Committee Members:

My name is Emma Vasicek and I have been an active community member in Jefferson County since 2021. I am the Executive Director of Evergreen Audubon & Nature Center, located in Jefferson County, and am testifying in support of HB26-1132. We annually serve more than 8,000 community members who reside across four counties: Gilpin, Clear Creek, Park, and Jefferson. The Mission of Evergreen Audubon & Nature Center is to conserve wildlife and natural ecosystems, provide community science experiences, and to inspire and educate our community to benefit all people and biodiversity. It is with this in mind – the known value of native plants – that I am writing in support of this bill.

Native plants are the foundation of a healthy ecosystem. Many insects have co-evolved with specific plants, and those insects are the primary food source for numerous local bird species. When birds have quality food sources, they are more successful in rearing their young and we see stronger bird populations around the state. When non-native plants are introduced to an area, they outcompete the native species and degrade the overall health of the habitat. Without the native plants and the insects that depend on them, our local birds struggle to survive because of lack of quality food and shelter.

Our native pollinators are similarly facing serious decline. These tiny superheroes support numerous aspects of our lives – from the food we eat, to the clothes we wear, and the landscapes that make Colorado so colorful. Unfortunately, studies have shown that insect populations have declined by more than 60% over the last few decades. By increasing the use of native plants on state-managed lands we can make a concerted effort to reverse the loss of biodiversity, and support the revitalization of our pollinator species.

As the continental U.S. continues to lose more than 150 million acres of habitat to urban sprawl, it is vitally important that we endeavor to plant ecoregionally specific plant material whenever possible. Through the support of HB26-1132, Colorado state agencies can serve as a leader by helping to build resilient and healthy landscapes that will benefit our pollinators, bird populations, and the people who call this state our home.

Also, as we work with individuals and families in the communities we serve, we encourage getting outdoors and the health benefits that come from connecting with nature. Planting native plant gardens is something we promote because of the enjoyment people get from them and because these become important habitats for birds – including serving as refueling stations during their long seasonal migrations. Passage of HB26-1132 would promote coordinated purchasing power across the state, and public-private partnerships that would expand the availability of native plants. The current limited availability and diversity of native plants to most communities is an issue, including in the four counties we serve. Many would be thrilled to have

more options available and to see Colorado state agencies be local leaders in the use of native plants in landscaping, which would use less water and require less maintenance.

For the reasons stated above, please vote yes for HB26-1132.

Thank you for your service on behalf of your respective districts, your time, and your consideration.

Kind regards,

Emma Vasicek  
Executive Director  
Evergreen Audubon & Nature Center  
[ExecutiveDirector@EvergreenAudubon.org](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@EvergreenAudubon.org)

**Committee:** House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee

**Testimony on:** House Bill 26-1132 Concerning Increasing Pollinator Habitats on Lands in the State

**Position:** Support

**Hearing Date:** 26 February 2026

Dear Chair McCormick, Vice Chair Mauro, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Steve Armstead, and I write on behalf of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation to express **support for House Bill 26-1132, Concerning Increasing Pollinator Habitats on Lands in the State.**

The Xerces Society is a science-based non-profit that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Insects are crucial parts of healthy ecosystems, with important roles in pollination, nutrient cycling, natural pest control, and the food chain. I am a Pollinator Conservation Specialist for the Xerces Society working here in Colorado to support efforts to conserve invertebrates and pollinators which include my contribution as a co-author of the Colorado Native Pollinating Insects Health Study completed in 2024.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the study was to explore the status of native pollinating insects within the state and develop recommended actions and land management practices the state could undertake for their conservation.

Colorado's landscapes provide habitat to over 1,000 species of bees which is nearly 30% of North America's bee species, and nearly 300 species of butterflies representing over 40% of the butterflies north of Mexico. Our state is important to pollinators and pollinators are important to us. The Pollinator Study concluded that the status of Colorado's native pollinating insects was tenuous in spite of the state's diverse landscapes. The study concluded that the key threats pollinators face are the loss of habitat through land conversion and land management practices that impair habitat, risks from pesticides, climate change, and impacts from non-native plants and insects. With this context, the Pollinator Study also identified actions that could be taken to support the needs of native pollinating

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<sup>1</sup> Armstead, S., A. Carper, D. Davidson, M. Blanchard, J. Hopwood, R. Larcom, S. Black, C. Briles, R. Irwin, G. Jolma, J. Resasco, S. Davis, J. Mola, and D. Inouye. 2024. *Colorado Native Pollinating Insects Health Study*. Denver: Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HByF7H2qO4vf\\_0GhKEG2eNiArs9GlwrP/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HByF7H2qO4vf_0GhKEG2eNiArs9GlwrP/view)

insects. Following the study, a key recommendation was achieved by the state legislature endorsing the need for Colorado Parks and Wildlife to have authority to manage invertebrates and rare plants.

The Pollinator Study also identified the importance of native plants and their role in providing essential habitat and food sources for pollinators. Nearly one quarter of the recommended actions were related to expanding the presence of native plants. This bill is an important next step in activating additional Pollinator Study recommendations on state-owned lands and demonstrating the state's ongoing leadership and commitment to supporting pollinator health. Through the bill's prioritizing the use of native plants on state-owned lands, coordinated purchasing across state agencies, supporting collaborations with state and private nurseries and public-private partnerships to expand availability and diversity of native plant materials, the state would be following through on recommendations from the Pollinator Study.

Another aspect of this bill promotes the use of land management practices recommended in the Pollinator Study including pollinator-friendly practices involving mowing and livestock grazing. Some management practices, including mowing and grazing, have the potential to negatively impact pollinators and their habitats. The application of pollinator supportive practices as described in the Pollinator Study can help to mitigate impacts and improve conditions for pollinators.

The Pollinator Study has helped provide a roadmap for the state to improve conditions for pollinators and support their conservation. Completing a comprehensive study on native plant availability, sources, and demand is an important foundational resource like the Pollinator Study to support the growth of markets and the availability of native plants resulting in healthier and more resilient environments around us and for pollinators.

Thank you to this committee for your work to steward the natural resources of this incredible state and for supporting actions that benefit the incredible diversity of pollinators that share our spaces and provide so many critical services to us.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve Armstead*

Steve Armstead  
Pollinator Conservation Specialist  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Steve.armstead@xerces.org

Good afternoon Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Brad Kuhn. I am the owner of Finding Nectar Nursery in Colorado, where I grow and promote pollinator friendly plants and help landowners create habitat that supports native pollinators.

I am here in strong support of HB26-1132.

This bill is about expanding habitat and opportunity for pollinators across Colorado lands. It encourages state agencies to prioritize the use of native, in state plant species that support pollinators when they are available and appropriate. It also emphasizes coordination in plant purchasing, education for land managers, and improved habitat practices grounded in the latest science.

Pollinators including bees, butterflies, flies, hummingbirds, beetles, and others are foundational to healthy ecosystems. They play a critical role in the reproduction of many native plants, wildflowers, and crops. Without robust pollinator populations, plant communities weaken and food systems become less resilient.

Increasing pollinator habitat benefits all Coloradans. It enhances biodiversity. It improves the resilience of natural landscapes. It supports agriculture not by regulating farming practices but by bolstering the very organisms that help crops thrive.

This bill also directs Colorado State University Extension to conduct a native plant availability study, helping us better understand supply chain barriers and opportunities for native pollinator plants across the state. That knowledge will guide future decisions about how we expand habitat where it is needed most.

HB26-1132 is a commonsense step forward. It works with existing land use decisions, improves how we plan and manage public lands, and strengthens our state's contribution to healthy landscapes without burdening landowners or farmers.

Supporting pollinator habitat is foundational to a resilient future for Colorado's communities, our outdoor heritage, and the food systems we all rely on.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB26-1132.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources**

**02/26/2026 Upon Adjournment**

**HB26-1132 Practices to Support Pollinators**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Rachel Manring  For  themselves	<p>In support of HB-1132: Concerning increasing pollinator habitat on state lands</p> <p>I am an ordinary, concerned voting citizen. For the last 27 years, I have lived in the middle of the city of Greeley on a residential plot of about 1/3 acre. In 2023, I started replanting our property with native plants, because I wanted to decrease our water bill and frequency of mowing. I had a vague understanding that native plants are better for the environment.</p> <p>By 2024, many of my native plants were mature enough to bloom, and that year my husband had, by far, the most prolific vegetable garden of all the years we lived here. He had not changed any products or gardening techniques. The only difference was that there were many more pollinators on our property, drawn by the native flowers.</p> <p>We have types of bees we have not seen before. They are native bees, smaller than honey bees and have orange stripes, not yellow. We have more butterflies. This year, for the first time, we had hummingbirds in our yard. We even had a little brown toad in the garden. My husband is now a strong believer in my native plant project.</p> <p>I have learned a lot in the past three years about the benefits of cultivating native plants. We did decrease our water bill and frequency of mowing, and substantially increased pollinators and garden output, all of this far beyond any expectations I had. I now believe that planting native plants is one of the best things we can do to make a positive difference in our very own environment, resulting in benefits that we can see with our own eyes. If we can make such a significant impact just in our own yard, it is certainly wise to scale this practice to larger areas.</p> <p>Besides the obvious good to the environment, the passing of this bill will increase awareness of the benefit of using native plants, and make them more available to the public. I am glad to see that this bill is under consideration, and I hope it passes.</p> <p>Thank you all for your work.</p> <p>Rachel Manring</p>

<p>Pam Hamamoto For Horticultural Art Society of Colorado Springs</p>	<p>I am a member of the Horticultural Art Society of Colorado Springs and Wild Ones. Both organizations are working more and more on making homes for native pollinators, finding more plants that are essential to native pollinators and educating the public on their importance in our lives.</p> <p>We support HB26-1132 emphatically! If we want to recognize our eco systems of today into the future we must act to support our pollinators that can not evolve as fast as our climate is changing. They need all the help we can give! Pam Hamamoto</p>
<p>Greg DiFiore For themselves</p>	<p>Dear Ag committee,</p> <p>The 2024 CO Native Pollinating Insects Health Study identifies habitat loss and a lack of diverse native plants as primary causes of pollinator decline, as native plants provide essential habitat and food sources on which pollinators depend. By establishing standards for the use of native plants on state-owned lands, the bill addresses the Study’s recommendation to expand and connect high-quality pollinator habitat at scale. Colorado leads in pollinator conservation, and this bill advances efforts to build resilient, healthy landscapes while strengthening native plant supply chains statewide. The bill encourages state agencies to prioritize the use of native plant materials when available and financially viable, while recognizing the need to balance pollinator habitat goals with other land-management priorities, including wildfire mitigation, climate resilience, noxious weed control, agricultural production, and public safety to ensure that native plants are integrated responsibly into state projects.</p> <p>We strongly encourage you to support this bill!</p> <p>Thank you, - Greg DiFiore</p>
<p>Dania Laubach For themselves</p>	<p>Dear Members of the Colorado House Agriculture, Water &amp; Natural Resources Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to urge you to support HB26-1132 respectfully.</p> <p>This important legislation would expand pollinator habitat on Colorado state lands and strengthen native plant propagation across our state. At a time when pollinator populations are declining and habitat loss continues to threaten biodiversity, HB26-1132 represents a practical, science-based, and forward-thinking solution.</p> <p>Healthy pollinator populations are essential to Colorado’s ecosystems, agricultural productivity, and overall environmental resilience. By increasing habitat on state-managed lands, this bill ensures that public lands serve as models of ecological stewardship. Additionally, expanding native plant propagation will</p>

	<p>improve statewide plant availability, supporting restoration projects, local nurseries, land managers, and residents working to incorporate native species into their landscapes.</p> <p>HB26-1132 is a commonsense investment in Colorado’s natural heritage, agricultural future, and environmental health. It reflects a proactive approach that benefits wildlife, farmers, gardeners, and communities alike.</p> <p>Thank you for your service and for your thoughtful consideration of this bill. I respectfully encourage you to vote yes on HB26-1132.</p> <p>Warmly,</p> <p>Dania Laubach, MLS, MPH</p> <p>Pronouns: She/Her</p>
<p>Anita Felker For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1132 because it encourages state agencies to prioritize the use of native plant materials. Using native plant materials when possible will help our pollinators find the plants they depend on for food and as habitat to lay eggs and allow those eggs to grow into a new generation of pollinators. If the state agencies work together to purchase native plant materials, it will create a demand for materials that private and public-private nurseries can then supply. Currently, the availability of native plant materials is limited. By increasing the demand for those materials by the state, supply will increase then the state as well as individual citizens and communities who wish to plant native plants will be able to find these plants more easily and at a lower cost. Planting native plants helps the native pollinators, makes our landscapes more able to withstand drought, and supports the birds that depend on our native plants. It makes Colorado more resilient and beautiful at the same time. Please support HB26-1132</p>
<p>Michele Mukatis For themselves</p>	<p>Please support increased pollinator habitat on State Lands! 🌱,🌱,🌱,🌱,</p> <p>I have lived in Colorado for over forty years. In that time, I've helped my mom xeriscape our Denver yard, before xeriscaping was really a thing, then did the same with my own Colorado Springs yard. Throughout that time, I learned more and more about how to grow plants and have helped many people to relandscape in more sustainable ways.</p> <p>In the past few years, I've specifically studied what it would take to support our whole eco-system. The plants that are native to each eco-region in Colorado support the soil and its microbiome as well as the creatures that live above ground from pollinators to large mammals. These plants also grow well, and don't take over, as some non-native species have turned out to do.</p>

	<p>In order to support the whole life cycle of a pollinator, the plant needs to provide food for multiple life stages as well as habitat for living, thriving and overwintering.</p> <p>That said, it's also so much easier to grow plants that are already adapted here. Our high desert landscape in southern Colorado needs plants that are specifically adapted to long dry spells and less frequent drenching rains, which is very different from the montane regions or those grasslands from Denver to the north.</p> <p>Please make sure to include provisions for native pollinator habitat in HB26-1132.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my comments!</p>
<p>Ingrid Moore For themselves</p>	<p>I strongly support this bill - please vote YES to pass it out of this committee.</p> <p>Implementing sustainable, restorative practices requires some time to transition away from an entire management system based on intensive chemical and soil-disrupting methods. The change requires a paradigm shift in policy that has to overcome the inertia of the status quo. I am asking you to enable this shift!</p> <p>This bill proposes an INVESTMENT, not a cost, that will provide sustainable benefits in the long run. It will improve Colorado's ecosystem resilience, conserve water resources, and support declining wildlife species by protecting Colorado's biodiversity and pollinator populations by increasing native plant habitats on state lands.</p> <p>The coordinated approach among state agencies could reduce costs through collective purchasing power while supporting local nurseries and the native plant industry, which is becoming an increasingly significant market.</p> <p>These are all goals that cannot be reached by following current practices.</p> <p>Please vote YES on this bill!</p>
<p>jeany rush Against themselves</p>	<p>TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES RE: HB26-1132 PRACTICE TO SUPPORT POLLINATORS SPONSORS: FROELICH, KIPP FROM: JEANY RUSH, COLORADO CONSTITUENT 2-26-26 VOTE: NO with cautions!</p> <p>While we definitely need to re-establish native plants, and support pollinators, we have to take a few pauses.</p> <p>The BLM, USDA, Forestry Services have already mismanaged a lot of public lands, and have been the cause of many fires due to improper land management. Further, they have also mismanaged grazing lands, leases, which help the land! Add the global loss of bees, you have a lot of situations to coordinate.</p>

	<p>Creating too many organizations in the mix also adds a "Who is on First" scenario, and worse, creates chaos, competition, and costs that may need to be seriously considered, since the state has gone so far out of budget.</p> <p>Also, I don't like the bill section in going out of the state, when we should literally deal with native from within the state, to preserve the integrity of what we are attempting to save.</p> <p>This is taking much too long in studies, and should be more focused on actual actions, and perhaps start much smaller, concentrating on plants, etc. which are toxin free, as organic as is possible.</p> <p>There may need to be more thought into talking to the ranchers, farmers, and getting suggestions from them, since they work the lands the most.</p> <p>There should be affordable and coordinated efforts with the private owners, not just having Government running the show. The Government organizations have already done too much damage, and do not always act in the best interests of the private sector.</p> <p>Again, I like the idea, but this is just too much government.</p> <p>Thank You</p>
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**DATE: February 24, 2026**

**FROM: Dr. Herb Grover, 1224 CR 335, Pagosa Springs, CO. 81147 (Archuleta County)**

**TO: Representative Katie Stewart, District 59; and members of the House Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources Committee.**

**RE: Support of HB26-1132 – Practices to Support Pollinators**

Representative Stewart and colleagues:

**I am writing to enthusiastically support HB26-1132 concerning Practices to Support Pollinators through policies and actions resulting in the intentional stewardship of native vegetation and plantings.**

I am a retired university professor with over 40 years' experience teaching and conducting research in ecology and environmental science at the graduate and undergraduate level. Before retiring in 2015 and moving to Archuleta County, CO, I taught at small liberal arts colleges in Texas, where active state-level programs to enhance plantings of native vegetation have been ongoing for many years. The ecological, environmental, and economic benefits of such efforts to support and sustain native plants are well documented and widely supported by the citizens of that state.

Since moving to Pagosa Springs, I have become very active in a number of conservation organizations, including the Weminuche Audubon Society, San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership, and the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership. Through these and other organizations, I have assumed an active role in coordinating citizen science projects monitoring the structure and composition bird communities in our area. The findings of our research parallel the declining trends in bird species diversity and population numbers reported in the scientific literature.

In recent years I have also established a nature and wildlife photograph business, "Herb's Field Notes", through which I present my photography at art shows across southwestern CO and other venues in New Mexico and Texas.

My involvement in these endeavors underscores my personal and professional commitment to environmental stewardship and restoration.

As noted in the introduction and supporting documentation for HB26-1132, the distribution of native plant communities has been declining in our region for many decades as a result of urban, industrial, and agricultural encroachment across the landscape. The higher-order ecological impacts of these widespread changes in the composition and structure of natural ecosystems, especially with regard to insect pollinators, are well documented.

The policies and procedures enacted through HB26-1132 will help counteract the negative human impacts on natural ecosystems that have occurred across our region over the past century. Efforts to reverse these impacts, especially to protect and restore plant pollinators, are critical to human health and prosperity in Colorado.

**For the sake of our environment and future generations of Coloradans, I urge you to vote in favor of HB26-1132.**

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of our citizens

Herb Grover

Email: [hgroverco@gmail.com](mailto:hgroverco@gmail.com)



## CONTACT

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February 24, 2026  
House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee

## Support HB26-1132 Practices to Support Pollinators (Rep. Froelich / Sen. Kipp)

The Honorable Chair McCormick, Vice Chair Mauro and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Benjamin. I am a policy advisor at Western Resource Advocates (WRA), where I work to reduce municipal water demand in the face of climate change, drought, and population growth. WRA has worked for more than 35 years to ensure our communities thrive in balance with nature. WRA supports HB26-1132 as an important step to encourage waterwise landscapes, and we thank Representative Froelich and Senator Kipp for bringing this bill forward.

Increasing the availability of waterwise native plants is a logical next step forward to improve our state's drought resilience. This bill expands the work of SB24-005 and HB25-1113, which limited the use of non-functional turf in new development. To ensure the success of those legislative efforts, it is crucial to increase the amount of native plants available in Colorado. We need to see waterwise native plants in our landscapes to reduce water used outdoors and save our precious water resources. These waterwise alternatives help keep our communities cool, attract pollinators, and lower water bills.

We urge you to vote "yes" on HB26-1132.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Benjamin  
Policy Advisor, Healthy Rivers  
Western Resource Advocates  
[chelsea.benjamin@westernresources.org](mailto:chelsea.benjamin@westernresources.org)

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