

2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

A summary of Colorado Farm Bureau's legislative activity in the First General Session of the 74th Colorado General Assembly.

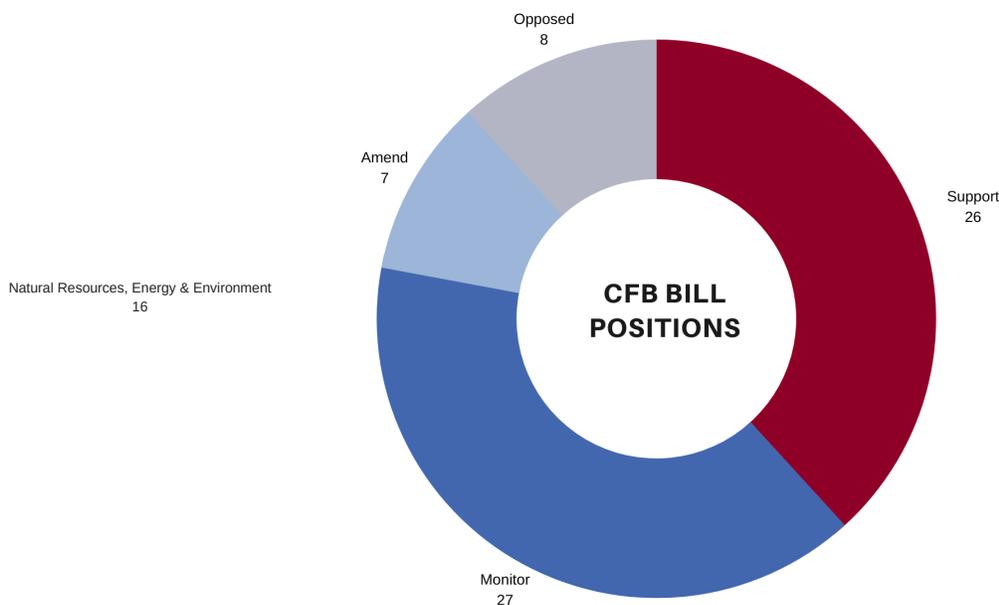
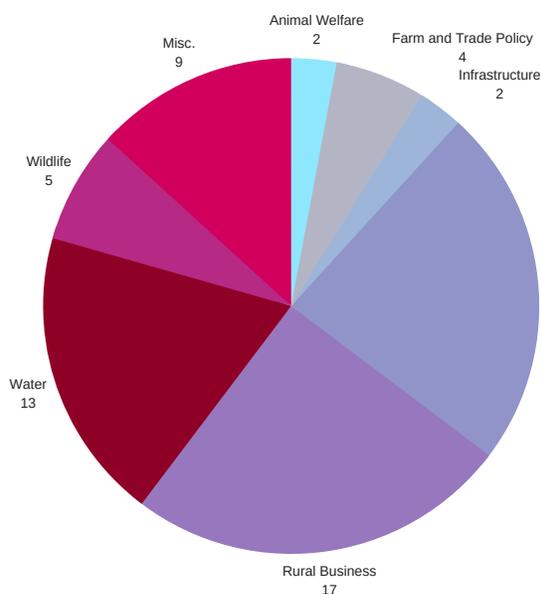


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2023 Policy Highlights

The first session of the 74th General Assembly is over! Going into this session, we knew it was going to be a difficult year. However, we finished session better than expected. We killed or heavily amended a number of bills that attacked private property rights, and passed a number of bills that will benefit Colorado Agriculture. This year, the legislature considered 617 bills, passing 484. CFB took positions on 68 of the bills. If you would like to see all the bills we followed this year, go check out the CFB Bill Tracker on our website, ColoradoFarmBureau.com.

CFB Policy Priorities



Private Property

This year we saw a concerning trend with bills attacking private property rights. We were able to kill or heavily amend all of these bills; however, this trend is likely not going to stop with the end of this session. With private property rights being a core principle of CFB, we will be watching all future attempts to erode and destroy private property rights in Colorado. Here are the bills we tracked that would have eroded property rights:

- HB 23-1066: Public Access Landlocked Publicly Owned Land (Opposed) (Failed)
- HB 23-1190: Affordable Housing Right of First Refusal (Opposed) (Vetoed)
- HB 23-1242: Water Conservation in Oil and Gas Operations (Opposed to Monitor) (Amended)
- HB 23-1152: Prohibit Foreign Ownership Agricultural and Natural Resources (Opposed) (Failed)
- HB 23-1257: Mobile Home Park Water Quality (Amend to Monitor) (Amended)
- SB 23-201: Mineral Resources Property Owners Rights (Opposed) (Failed)

Water

Water is another important policy issue for CFB. With the ongoing pressures Colorado is facing due to drought and watershed health, there were two bills that passed related to those issues. First, SB 23-295 (Colorado River Drought Task Force) as introduced would have created a program to allow for the selling and leasing of water rights for certain purposes that would be controlled by the Colorado River District. However, after much

deliberation, the bill sponsors agreed to turn it into a task force to further discuss how the policy can be crafted to create a program that allows for the leasing of water rights for compact compliance purposes in the Colorado River basin. Additionally, SB 23-270 (Projects To Restore Natural Stream Systems) passed the legislature, significantly pared down from its introduced version. As introduced, the bill created concerns around injuries to existing water rights holders and the lack of process that stream restoration projects had to go through. The bill, as passed, only allowed certain minor stream restoration activities to be presumed non-injurious to water right holders. These activities include bank stabilization and flood erosion projects that don't hold back water.

Wildlife

This session we passed two very important and impactful bills related to wolves. With the final wolf plan being approved and wolves likely being introduced at the end of this year or first of next year, there were bills introduced to address future issues. First, SB 23-255 (Wolf Depredation Compensation Fund) created a designated fund specifically to compensate ranchers and livestock owners for both direct and indirect losses due to wolf depredation. This year, \$175,000 was appropriated to go into the fund. After this year, there will be a \$300,000 appropriation. SB 23-255 was unanimously passed by both the House and Senate, and later signed by the Governor. Second, SB 23-256 (Management Of Gray Wolves Reintroduction) required that a final determination of a 10(j) rule be made before wolves are reintroduced. A 10(j) rule would give the state shared responsibility of wolf management and provide more management tools, including incidental take. This bill passed with resounding bipartisan support; however, Governor Polis vetoed the bill. Both of these bills would provide necessary help and assurances to our ranchers and livestock owners, but we will celebrate the creation of the Wolf Depredation Compensation Fund. A huge thank you to the prime bill sponsors of SB 23-255, Speaker Julie McCluskie and Representative Marc Catlin, and Senators Dylan Roberts and Perry Will and prime sponsors of SB 23-256 Representatives Meghan Lukens and Matt Soper, and

Miscellaneous

This year was a big year for pesticides, as we were tasked with reauthorizing the Pesticide Applicators' Act in SB 23-192 (Sunset Pesticide Applicators' Act). This statute houses all the pesticide applicator's licenses and state regulation of pesticides. We knew this was going to be a fight after last year's pollinator bill, and there were many attempts to tack bad amendments. However, in the end, SB 23-192 passed without any major changes to existing statute. Additionally, the legislature passed SB 23-092 (Agrivoltaics). This bill creates incentives for solar energy to coexist on property with agricultural production.

Finally, there were two other bills that impact Colorado agriculture. As many have likely seen or heard, Colorado was the first state to pass a Right-to-Repair law for agricultural equipment. HB 23-1011 (Consumer Right To Repair Agricultural Equipment) requires a manufacturer to provide parts, embedded software, firmware, tools, or documentation to independent repair providers and owners of the manufacturer's agricultural equipment in order to do self repairs to equipment. Second, the legislature passed SB 23-152 (Sunset Continue Custom Processing Meat Animals) which extends the Custom Processing of Meat Animals Act until September 2032.



Overall, this session ended much better than anticipated. We were able to fight off concerning attacks on private property rights and pass bills that will provide assurances to our members.

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