

We're over 2 weeks in and the 2025 NM Legislature is in full swing. To date, a total of 711 pieces of legislation have been introduced. Legislators can continue introducing legislation until Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>. NMCOG has upped the number of bills we are monitoring to 21. Most have yet to "gain legs" meaning they have not been scheduled for their first committee hearing yet. We will continue adding bills to the active list as they show movement.

## **NMCOG IS ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE FOLLOWING BILL**

### **SENATE BILL 5 (as amended)**

WILDLIFE HERITAGE ACT (fresh version of the bill is still unavailable online)

### **NMCOG STANCE**

SUPPORT as long as all our amendments remain intact

### **BILL SPONSORS**

Senators - [Peter Wirth](#) (D), [Pete Campos](#) (D), [Crystal Brantley](#) (R)  
Representatives - [Matthew McQueen](#) (D)

### **BILL LOCATION**

[Senate Rules Committee](#) (Hearing on 1/28/25, Do pass 6-3)  
[Senate Conservation Committee](#) (Hearing on 2/8/25, Do Pass 5-3)  
[Senate Finance Committee](#) (Hearing Date TBD)

### **BILL SUMMARY**

People continue to be very confused about why NMCOG would be supporting this bill. The confusion seems to revolve around the fact that NMCOG agrees with other supporting organizations (which we are typically at odds with) like the NM Wildlife Federation and WildEarth Guardians. Some Republican Legislators are feeding into this confusion by using their personal bias against the NM Game and Fish to sensationalize the fears of the handful of misinformed individuals who are in opposition to the bill. Despite the noise, I promise the amended version of this bill would do more good than bad for the NM outfitting industry. You're just going to have to take my word for it, I've read the bill no less than 100 times.

If you didn't read last week's deep dive into the positive aspects of this bill, here's the cliff notes version. The amended version of this bill does the following:

- Changes Commission appointment process to be accomplished through a nominating committee. Attempts to take politics out of the Commission. Takes power away from the Governor. Adds language that all commissioners must have a "knowledge of hunting and fishing". Adds detailed hunting and ranching positions (which do not exist in the current commission statute)
- Changes the name of the NM Game and Fish to NM Department of Wildlife (not my favorite thing but has been amended to allow change to take place through asset depreciation – which is a much cheaper option than all at once)
- Changes the Department's ability to regulate take of wildlife species by allowing the commission to develop rules for any species they determine needs attention (was

- originally a mandate that the commission establish rules for all wildlife – which NMCOG was opposed to – was amended to simply allow the commission to develop rules based on science. **No longer an unfunded mandate**)
- Increases hunting and fishing license fees for the first time since 2006. (Uses nonresident fees that were negotiated and agreed upon by NMCOG during multiple meetings with the Dept. several years back).
  - Links hunting and fishing licenses to the Consumer Price Index. This would allow the commission to increase license fees in the future, if need be, without having to go back through the legislature. (**Not a mandate to increase fees annually**)
  - Adds \$10.5 million (over 3 years) in general fund money to be used specifically for non-game species conservation
  - **Does not prevent trapping**
  - **Does not limit predator management**
  - **Does not move the Dept. away from using game hunting as a primary method of wildlife management or as a primary source of funding for wildlife conservation.**

### NMCOG IS ACTIVELY OPPOSING THE FOLLOWING BILLS

#### SENATE BILL 279

#### [GAS OPERATED FIREARMS EXCLUSION ACT](#)

#### NMCOG STANCE

STRONG OPPOSE

#### BILL SPONSORS

Senators - [Debbie O'Malley](#) (D), [Heather Berghmans](#) (D)

Representatives – [Andrea Romero](#) (D), [Charlotte Little](#) (D), [Roybal Caballero](#) (D)

#### BILL LOCATION

[Senate Judiciary Committee](#) (Hearing Date TBD)

#### BILL SUMMARY

This bill intends to ban the importation, sale, transfer, or possession of gas operated firearms. However, it defines gas-operated firearm to include any firearm that uses “a blowback-operated system that directly uses the expanding gases of the ignited propellant powder acting on the cartridge case to drive the breechblock or breech bolt rearward”. This definition would include basically every semi-automatic firearm under the sun!

#### HOUSE/SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3/4

#### [ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT](#)

#### NMCOG STANCE

STRONG OPPOSE

#### BILL SPONSORS

Representatives – [Joanne J. Ferrary](#) (D)

Senators – [Antoinette Sedillo Lopez](#) (D)

**BILL LOCATION**

[Government, Elections and Indian Affairs Committee](#) (Passed No Rec. 6-3)  
[House Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee](#) (Hearing Date TBD)

**BILL SUMMARY**

A ballot initiative to change the NM constitution to provide “the people of the state with environmental rights, including the right to clean and healthy air, water, soil and environments, healthy native flora, fauna and ecosystems, a safe climate and the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic and healthful qualities of the environment.” This change to the constitution would produce nothing more than an endless parade of litigation and would in fact hinder wildlife conservation efforts.