

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO, SUPPORTING THE AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, we are facing an urgent conservation and climate crisis as habitat is lost and greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase; and

WHEREAS, from 2001 to 2017, more than 24 million acres of land were lost to human development in the lower 48 States, which equals to the loss of one football field-sized patch of land every 30 seconds; and

WHEREAS, worldwide, climate-related disasters jumped 83 percent — from 3,656 events during the 1980-1999 period to 6,681 from 2000-2019. Major floods have more than doubled, the number of severe storms has risen 40 percent, and there have been major increases in droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves; and

WHEREAS, worldwide biodiversity is deteriorating at a faster rate than at any time in human history; and

WHEREAS, biodiversity loss and human encroachment upon wildlife habitat is increasing the risk of infectious diseases such as COVID-19, Lyme disease and SARS; and

WHEREAS, wilderness, wildlife refuges, national conservation lands, monuments and other conserved places provide access for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping and other outdoor recreation pursuits; and

WHEREAS, our natural places provide us with food supplies and clean drinking water, boost our economies, and offer us a wide range of health benefits; and

WHEREAS, protected public lands are the backbone of our state's outdoor recreation industry, which generates \$788 billion in consumer spending and supports 5.2 million jobs nationally; and

WHEREAS, the America the Beautiful Initiative is a science-based, locally led and voluntary initiative to conserve at least 30 percent of the Earth's lands and ocean by the year 2030; and

WHEREAS, this campaign was launched to address our climate crisis and reverse the destruction of our wildlife, waters and natural places; and

WHEREAS, science-based research has found that conserving and restoring lands and waters is necessary to preserving the Earth's biodiversity and ecosystems and mitigating the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, permanently conserved private lands, including working ranches and farms, protect open spaces, preserve threatened wildlife and help maintain our Colorado way of life; and

WHEREAS, every person, regardless of race, background or economic status, should have access to safe, clean and close-to-home opportunities to get outside in nature; and

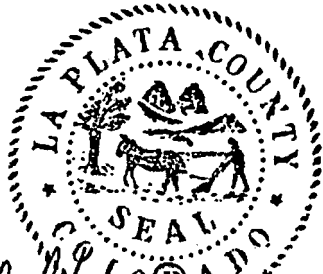
WHEREAS, scientists are warning that protecting at least 30 percent of lands and water is the bare minimum we must achieve if we hope to stabilize the climate.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LA PLATA COUNTY AS FOLLOWS:

1. That we establish our support for the America the Beautiful initiative and science-based, locally led, voluntary efforts to conserve and restore at least 30 percent of lands and water by 2030 for the benefit of everyone.
2. That we call on the U.S. government, Congress, and state and local leaders to significantly increase the tools and resources available to achieve locally-driven conservation projects, and to facilitate collaboration and good-faith conversations among all people living in the United States as we work together to address inequitable access to the outdoors as well as our biodiversity and climate crises.
3. That we call upon our citizens to support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts.

DONE AND APPROVED IN DURANGO, LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO this 14th day of September, 2021.

Attest



Elizabeth Duran
Clerk to the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO

Marsha Porter-Norton
Marsha Porter-Norton, Chair

Matt Salka
Matt Salka, Vice-Chair

Clyde Church
Clyde Church, Commissioner