

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 117 to title 24 as follows:

24-117-101. Short title. THE SHORT TITLE OF THIS ARTICLE 117 IS THE “COLORADO HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT ACT”.

24-117-102. Purposes and findings. (1) THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO HEREBY FIND AND DECLARE THAT:

(a) THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACT IS TO ENSURE THAT EVERY PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO HAVE CLEAN AIR, CLEAN SOIL, CLEAN WATER, A SAFE CLIMATE, AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND TO PRESERVATION OF ECOSYSTEMS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE STATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS;

(b) THE STATE AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE SHALL SERVE AS TRUSTEES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF COLORADO AND SHALL CONSERVE, PROTECT, AND MAINTAIN THESE RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, INCLUDING PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS; AND

(c) IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE STATE AND ANY AGENCY, INSTITUTION, AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE TO PRIORITIZE THE PROTECTION OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

24-117-103. Definitions. AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE 117, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(1) “HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT” MEANS SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE CONDITIONS FOR HUMAN LIFE AND WILDLIFE, INCLUDING HEALTHY AIR, WATER, LAND, AND ECOSYSTEMS.

(2) “PERSON” MEANS A NATURAL PERSON.

(3) “POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE” MEANS ANY COUNTY, CITY, CITY AND COUNTY, TOWN, HOME RULE CITY, HOME RULE COUNTY, AND HOME RULE CITY AND COUNTY.

24-117-104. Healthy environment application. THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND ANY AGENCY, INSTITUTION, AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE SHALL GIVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITIZATION TO THE PROTECTION OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WHEN ENACTING STATUTES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND ORDINANCES. THE FAILURE TO ENSURE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO ANY EXCEEDANCE OR VIOLATION OF A STATE OR FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL RULE, STANDARD, OR HEALTH ADVISORY.

24-117-105. Enforcement. THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT MAY BE ENFORCED BY ANY PERSON RESIDING WITHIN COLORADO, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, A STATE AGENCY, AND ANY OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE IN AN ACTION AT LAW FOR DAMAGES OR IN AN ACTION IN EQUITY FOR INJUNCTIVE OR DECLARATORY RELIEF FOR ANY FAILURE TO ABIDE BY OR ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. IN ANY ACTION BY AN AGGRIEVED PERSON, OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE FOR ENFORCEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, PUNITIVE DAMAGES FOR RECKLESS DISREGARD RESULTING IN VIOLATIONS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT MAY BE AWARDED, AND THE COURT MAY AWARD REASONABLE COSTS AND ATTORNEY FEES IF THE COMPLAINING PARTY PREVAILS.

SECTION 2. Effective date. This act takes effect upon official declaration of the governor and is self-executing.