



Memorandum

To: Joint Budget Committee
From: Kelly Shen, JBC Staff (303-866-5434)
Date: April 22, 2026
Subject: Adjustment to Severance Tax Refinance

The Long Bill refinanced \$2.0 million for the Species Conservation Trust Fund from the Severance Tax Operational Fund to the Wildlife Cash Fund in the Department of Natural Resources. However, this increases revenue subject to TABOR by \$2.0 million, since funds from the Wildlife Cash Fund leave the enterprise when they are deposited into the Species Conservation Trust Fund.

After discussions with the Department, the Office of State Planning and Budgeting, and the Office of Legislative Legal Services, **staff recommends a Long Bill amendment to reduce the TABOR revenue impact of the refinance by \$2.0 million.** The amendment would spend funds directly from the enterprise for purposes similar to the Species Conservation Trust Fund. Funds would not enter the Species Conservation Trust Fund.

Instead, the amendment:

- Moves \$2.0 million Wildlife Cash Fund from the Species Conservation Trust Fund line item in the Executive Director's Office to the Wildlife Operations line item in the Division of Parks and Wildlife.
- Adds a footnote specifying that the additional \$2.0 million for Wildlife Operations is intended to be used for programs similar to the Species Conservation Trust Fund.
- Allows three-year roll-forward authority for those funds, since these are multi-year conservation projects that would have roll-forward authority if funded through the Species Conservation Trust Fund.