



February 10, 2020

The Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

Based on historic Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) positions and the undue hardships that would come to Colorado meat producers and consumers, the vast majority of Colorado producers, organizations, and companies are opposed to a mandatory COOL program at the state or national level. Not to mention, that this legislation is in direct violation of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and commerce clause, a provision of the U.S. Constitution. While we support products produced in the US, any perceived benefits of this legislation will be significantly outweighed by increasing cost and decreasing consumer confidence.

The bill seeks to require all retailers to label meat as "Imported" if they cannot prove that the meat comes from an animal that was born, raised, and harvested in the United States. This would increase costs due to traceability, compliance, and supply limitations on retailers, consumers, and livestock producers. There is currently not a mandated traceability program that follows the meat from the farm to retail, which makes this bill impossible for retailers to comply with. We oppose this legislation due to the additional, unnecessary, and noncontributory regulation it would establish. The USDA estimates that the implementation of a national beef COOL program would be \$2.5 billion of which Colorado companies would bear a significant financial burden. HB20-1117 would require livestock tracking from all 50 states in order for meat products to be sold in Colorado, placing sole obligation on companies and retailers in Colorado.

Additionally, and arguably most importantly, COOL does not provide any additional food safety or animal health information or protection. All meat products (domestic and imported) sold in the US meet the same rigorous food safety standards and the passage of HB20-1117 would not improve food safety and would also place an unnecessary onus on businesses and families in Colorado.

Voluntary labeling programs have been successful in returning premiums to livestock producers and retailers for decades and the role of the government has been to protect the integrity of these programs. This legislation would reverse that approach and place an undue burden on producers, retailers, and families. The passage of HB20-1117 would have severe detrimental effects on Colorado families, whether they produce agricultural products, or simply consume them.

Sincerely,

Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Colorado Farm Bureau

Colorado Livestock Association

Colorado Association of Wheat Growers

Colorado Wool Growers Association