

- ⚡ OUTDOOR RECREATION
- ⚡ TOURISM
- ⚡ SAFETY
- ⚡ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

POWERLINE TRAILS

HB22-1104

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Loveland's North Trail

BACKGROUND

Colorado has many hundreds of miles of transmission lines, and hundreds more planned—delivering clean electricity to our cities and towns. Communities across the state are partnering with their utility to build long-distance multimodal walking, hiking, and bicycling paths underneath these powerlines. This doubles the value of these community assets and makes use of under-utilized land. Similar to "rail trails" along old railroad easements, these powerline trails:

- Bring outdoor recreation tourism to rural areas of the state
- Provide a network of safe and fun routes for work, school, or play, away from car traffic
- Reduce the land acquisition cost of new multimodal paths through public/private partnerships
- Improve sustainability and community connection

ABOUT THE BILL

To encourage, streamline, and accelerate development of these powerline trails while protecting safety, this bill has two parts:

- **Notification:** Utilities will notify local governments about the potential for powerline trails under transmission lines that are planned to go through their jurisdiction, providing examples, design best practices, funding suggestions, and safety requirements.
- **Utility Safety Protections:** Utilities will be able to provide consultation, review, and approval of trail designs; temporarily close trails for line maintenance without prior notification; add safety requirements for minimum clearances, conductive and non-conductive materials vegetation, and trail-related amenities; and use the trails for utility maintenance vehicles. It also allows utilities to recover the costs it contributes to enabling these trails.

EXAMPLES

Powerline trails are not a new idea—many examples already demonstrate that they are feasible and highly-valued. However, most local governments, tourism offices, community advocates, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts are still unaware of their potential. In other cases, they are hindered by questions around design, funding, maintenance, or liability. This bill addresses these challenges through a combination of education, awareness, outreach, safety protocols, and specific protections. Check out these examples that showcase the possibilities.



Fort Collins Power Trail



Douglas County's New East/West Regional Trail (opened 2021)



Platte River by Thornton's Pelican Ponds



Lakewood Dry Gulch Trail from Denver to Lakewood



Loveland's North Trail



rails-to-trails
conservancy

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