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MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennifer Quermann
Butterfly Pavilion
jquermann@butterflies.org
703-477-0668

**Governor Signs Landmark Legislation at Butterfly Pavilion Recognizing Invertebrates
as Wildlife in Colorado**
Butterfly Pavilion Celebrates Milestone in Conservation

Denver/Westminster, CO, May 17, 2024 – Today at [Butterfly Pavilion](#), Governor Jared Polis signed into law Colorado House Bill 24-1117, a groundbreaking step for wildlife conservation by adding invertebrates to the species that may be studied and conserved in Colorado. With invertebrates comprising a staggering 97% of all animal species on earth, this legislation officially recognizes them under the purview of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), empowering CPW to protect and conserve these vital creatures of virtually every ecosystem on the planet.

"Butterfly Pavilion enthusiastically embraces this milestone and eagerly anticipates the profound impact it will have on invertebrate well-being," declared Dr. Rich Reading, Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion. "This bill signifies a monumental stride in invertebrate conservation in Colorado, offering unprecedented opportunities to propel efforts to prioritize data collection to help protect and conserve these critical creatures which are the foundation of all life on earth."

Prior to this bill, there was no public funding or managing authority dedicated to actively conserving invertebrate populations in Colorado. With this legislation, CPW now has the capability to fund and develop programs aimed at studying and conserving invertebrates, including butterflies, beetles, bees, spiders and many others.

Butterfly Pavilion welcomes this legislation as it will significantly benefit invertebrate research, conservation and education efforts in Colorado for several reasons:

1. **Recognition and Support:** This bill signals a shift in public perception and will potentially increase support for invertebrate conservation efforts.
2. **Research Opportunities:** With the passage of this bill, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) now has the authority to fund programs dedicated to studying and conserving invertebrates.
3. **Collaborative Partnerships:** The bill empowers CPW to develop programs focused on invertebrate conservation.
4. **Educational Impact:** As invertebrates gain recognition as an integral part of Colorado's wildlife, there will likely be increased interest in learning about these

creatures. Butterfly Pavilion is pleased to offer educational programs to raise awareness about invertebrates and their importance in the ecosystem.

5. **Long-term Conservation:** This bill helps ensure the long-term survival of these species. Butterfly Pavilion contributes to this goal through our research, conservation, breeding programs and public engagement activities.

Butterfly Pavilion passionately testified in support of this bill at the Capitol on two occasions; February 22 and April 3, 2024. Embedded within this legislation is a powerful message:

"With a few exceptions, Colorado Parks and Wildlife does not have statutory authority over invertebrate species, nor does any state agency have oversight of native rare plants. Lack of data limits Colorado's ability to assess the status of threats to, and conservation needs of invertebrates and rare plants. Creating programs designed to support conservation of rare native plants and invertebrates can lessen the likelihood that the species will be added to federal threatened or endangered lists. ... Therefore, the general assembly determines that the Parks and Wildlife division should study and determine the conservation needs of native rare plants and invertebrates and implement voluntary programs to conserve and protect them"

"Together with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and community partners, Butterfly Pavilion will work tirelessly to safeguard the well-being of invertebrates and the ecosystems they inhabit," concluded Dr. Reading.

About Butterfly Pavilion

Butterfly Pavilion has been part of the Colorado community since 1995 and is the first Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited, stand-alone, non-profit invertebrate zoo in the world, located in Westminster, Colorado. Butterfly Pavilion's mission is to foster an appreciation of invertebrates by educating the public about the need to protect and care for threatened habitats globally, while conducting research for solutions in invertebrate conservation. Beyond Colorado and the United States, Butterfly Pavilion conservationists are doing important invertebrate research, conservation and education projects around the world from Mongolia and Tanzania to Turks and Caicos and Sumatra, Indonesia.

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