

AUDUBON
FINAL
LEGISLATIVE REPORT

16, May, 2017

Jen Boulton

We have survived the 2017 legislative session! As expected, there wasn't much of note that made it to the finish line on the conservation front. On the other hand, nothing terrible happened either. In other arenas, however, there were some enormous changes. After five or six years of intractable resistance between the various players, there was an agreement reached on construction defect reform. Also, after three years of bitter fighting, huge kudos are due to Rep. KC Becker, Sen. Sonnenberg, Rep. Jon Becker, and Sen. Baumgardner for their dogged pursuit, and success in solving the hospital provider fee conundrum. This compromise is a big deal as it alleviates some of the stress on the current budget which might stop the drain on natural resources cash funds for other programs.

**Denotes a priority bill*

AIR QUALITY/ENERGY

***SB301 ENERGY CLEANUP**

(Scott, Becker KC)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB303 was an extremely broad "cleanup" bill. The title was "Concerning Energy Related Statutes". That title encompassed absolutely anything. As introduced, the bill had twenty three sections, each of which addressed a different area of statute. As a result, the bill did a ton of different things, and each of them had its own set of issues and consequences. Sections one and two dealt with requiring the PUC to develop new rules for how investor

owned utilities would acquire natural gas and natural gas facilities. Section three repealed the Wind for Schools program. Section four repealed the school loan program to encourage energy efficiency. Sections five and six eliminated the involvement of the Governor's Energy Office in biomass, and in development of a central location for resources related to building trades. Section seven added large scale hydro and nuclear as energy sources to be promoted by the State. And so on, and so on, and so on....

The trouble was, without the bill, the energy office was completely unfunded for the future, and ceased to exist due to sunset provisions in current law. The House ripped out all the problematic pieces, and left a shell that extended the office, at a lower funding level, which made it an acceptable bill. Unfortunately, in the very last motion of the session, the Senate said no, and killed the bill. Stay tuned for the possibility of a special session here.

SB35 OIL/GAS TAMPERING

(Sonnenberg, Becker J)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB35 raised the classification for criminally tampering with, or attempting to tamper with oil and gas collection from a petty offense or class 2 misdemeanor, to a class 6 felony.

HB1336 FORCED POOLING

(Young, Aguilar)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

Current law authorizes forced pooling, a process by which any interested person—typically an oil and gas operator—may apply to the Colorado oil and gas conservation commission for an order to pool oil and gas resources located within a particularly identified drilling unit. After giving notice to interested parties and holding a hearing, the commission can adopt an order to force owners of oil and gas resources within the drilling unit who have not consented to the application (nonconsenting owners) to allow an oil and gas operator to produce the oil and gas within the drilling unit notwithstanding the owners' lack of consent.

HB1336 required that a majority of royalty owners had to join an application before the remainder could be force-pooled. The bill also required specific notice provisions to royalty owners, and publicly available lists of who would be force-pooled.

SB145 ELECTRIC UTILITY GRID PLANS

(Fenberg, Foote)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

SB145 required qualifying utilities to include distributed generation in plans for acquisition of new infrastructure. Qualifying utilities included investor owned and a couple of larger municipally owned utilities. This bill was a step forward in upgrading the utility grid to make distributed generation more efficient, and accessible.

HB1102 COAL ROLLING

(Ginal, Coram)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

HB1102 prohibited intentional release of black smoke from vehicles less than 14,000lbs as a nuisance. It made the practice a Class A traffic infraction, with a penalty of \$100.

SB278 COAL ROLLING (x2)

(Coram, Ginal)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

Apparently the third time is the charm. SB278 added some exclusions to HB1102, specifically that the bill will not apply to agricultural or commercial vehicles. It also reduced the fine to a \$35 ticket for a first offense. Thanks to Sen. Coram and Rep Ginal for their tireless efforts in this fight.

SB47 WASTE TIRES**(Coram)**

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB47 extended the existing fees for the waste tire fund. It also included agricultural use of tires as an approved end use. The intent of the waste tire fund is to drive research and markets for recycling of tires. Simply compacting them and using them as berms or for sediment control isn't recycling.

HB1299 INTEGRATE STORAGE IN IRP**(Hansen, Fenberg)**

Position: Support

Status: Dead

HB1299 required the TLRC to hold a hearing over the summer. The hearing would have considered the social and economic costs and benefits of requiring the PUC to include targets for viable amounts of energy storage (such as batteries, heat sinks, and pumped hydro) as part of the resource acquisition planning process for utilities subject to the RES.

SJR2 BIOCHAR**(Merrifield, Thurlow)**

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SJR2 declares State support for continuing research into the potential benefits of biochar. While biochar has exciting possible applications, and could be a huge boon in the fight against climate change, care must be taken in the definition of biochar. Merely partially burning wood doesn't help matters, and the resolution lacks a definition of biochar that would limit research to "good" biochar.

SB179 FEES FOR SOLAR INSTALLATION

(Kerr, Herod)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SB179 clarifies that the cap on fees for installation of solar energy facilities includes all associated fees. Currently there is some confusion over whether the cap applies solely to the fee for the permit.

SB105 CONSUMER RIGHT TO KNOW

(Garcia, KC Becker)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SB105 requires electric utility providers to include an itemized list of charges on each customer bill.

HB1116 CONTINUE LEAP

(Hamner, Humenik)

Position: Monitor

Status: Passed

HB1116 continues the LEAP program indefinitely as a tier 2 program under severance tax funding. While LEAP is a valuable program, severance tax has never been the appropriate funding source, and as severance taxes decline, funding for water programs grows ever tighter.

SJM1 WILDFIRE RESPONSE

(Jones, Hamner)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SJM1 is a request to Congress to increase funding for wildfire control. The Memorial asks Congress to consider other funding sources for wildfire response in order to alleviate pressure on existing forest health funding

ANTI-REGULATION BILLS

***SB186 REDUCE REGULATORY BURDEN FOR BUSINESS** (Tate, Lawrence)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB186 required agencies to include a “regulatory flexibility” analysis as part of all new (or updated) rules. The analysis could have included less stringent regulations, longer timeframes for achieving compliance, or simplified reporting requirements. The intent was to make compliance “easier” for small businesses. On the bright side, the bill did improve the definition of small business by requiring independent ownership, and limiting gross annual sales to less than \$6M.

HB1124 TAKINGS (Buck, Neville T)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

A regulatory taking (often called property rights by the other side) is the concept that regulation of property is the same as confiscation of property. IT IS NOT!

HB1124 was a full-fledged takings bill. It required local governments which imposed a ban OR moratorium on hydraulic fracturing to compensate the oil and gas industry for lost profit and for lost expenditures as a result of the ban or delay.

***SB276 REGULATORY FISCAL IMPACT** (Neville, Neville)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB276 eliminated fines for first time violations by small businesses. The bill required agencies to notify businesses of violations, and offer a 30 day opportunity to cure the violation. The bill also required the agency to provide education on future compliance. Of

note, the bill did NOT apply to violations of rules which were: state issued permits, licenses, or registrations; matters related to bidding on state contracts; activities required by Federal law, activities enforced by the administrator of the UCC, activities designated by the attorney general; activities related to lobbyist registration and reporting; activities regulated by the Civil Rights Division; activities regulated by CDPHE; and activities for which violation punishments were prescribed by statute.

***SB₁ REGULATORY RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

(Neville, Neville)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

The first bill of the session in each chamber is generally a statement on what the leadership in the chamber considers to be the most important issue of the session.

It was telling that the first Senate Bill of 2017 was part of the annual rerun of eliminating regulations. SB₁ eliminated fines for initial violations of agency rules, and required instead, that the violator be given an opportunity to fix the problem. The bill defined small business as one with less than 500 employees (that's a pretty big small business). It was nearly identical to bills introduced in the last several years, except that it didn't even require education about compliance, it just gave the business a 30 day (or more if requested) get out of jail free card to stop breaking the law.

SB₂ AGENCIES REVIEW RULES

(Humenik, Lawrence)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

Under current law, all agencies are required to perform a review of their rules on a schedule implemented by the Department of Regulatory Agencies.

SB₂ eliminated the DORA schedule, and replaced it with a requirement that each agency perform the rules audit every three years. This essentially meant that agencies would have been perpetually in a review mode. It increased cost and reduced the efficacy of rules (which was its intent, as a precursor to eliminating rules).

HB1006 STATUTORY CITES IN RULES

(Foote, Kagan)

Position: Watch

Status: Signed

HB1006 creates a non-legislative method for correcting mistakes in citations for agency rules. The issue doesn't directly concern us, but the title is broad enough to allow mischief in the form of amendments. We need to keep an eye on the bill to ensure it doesn't become something untenable.

OPEN SPACE/WILDLIFE

HB1141 FEDERAL TAKINGS

(Lewis)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

HB1141 was the "Bundy Bill of Rights". It prohibited any federal employee from taking an action that could have diminished the value of a range allotment. The bill specifically included limits on fencing, sale, and "actions which constituted a physical or regulatory taking". The bill made violation an unclassified felony, with a \$500,000 fine and up to 5 years imprisonment!

***HB1250 NONGAME CHECKOFF**

(Lebsock, Coram)

Position: Support as amended

Status: Passed

HB1250 extends the nongame checkoff for five years. As introduced there were some significant issues as it also opens up the fund to grants for use by wildlife rehabilitators, and creates a new board to oversee the distribution of those grants. After discussions with the sponsor, we have reached agreement on a series of changes which make the bill much more palatable. Most importantly, the title will retain the word nongame, for continuity and for recognition by those who have contributed to the fund for decades. Secondly, there will be a wildlife specific member on the board. Thirdly, the language has been

clarified to ensure that funds can only be used for wildlife, not for rehab of domestic animals. It's important to note that this was never the intent of either the sponsor or the proponents. Finally, there are a number of minor technical changes to clarify and correct drafting within the bill.

HB1321 CPW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

(Arndt, Fenberg)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

After waiting for over half the session for the result of more than two years of work, HB1321 was finally introduced. It was a very comprehensive finance package, and it had some issues. The bill granted CPW authority to raise and lower license fees, and parks fees within a statutory cap that was basically 50% higher than current levels. The bill also reinstated the senior fishing license at a maximum of half the regular rate, and raised nonresident fishing licenses to be on par with surrounding states. The bill required CPW to report back annually on the status of license/parks fees, and the programs funded by any increases. The division also had to report on use of wildlife areas by nongame users, and on proposals for nongame contributions to maintenance and management of state owned lands.

The biggest issue with the bill was section 4, which prohibited CPW from using any revenue associated with increased license fees for fee title acquisitions of land or water. Clearly a perpetual ban on the ability to purchase land was unacceptable. Despite enormous efforts on the part of the department, the sportsmen's community, and the conservation community, the Senate Finance summarily killed the bill on a party line vote. We will continue to work with the department on a bill for next year. ** Note there was an attempt to amend seaplanes into the bill!*

HB1066 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

(Lewis)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

HB1066 was another attempt to provide an off ramp for taxpayers who had tax credits associated with conservation easements denied. The bill had two main components. The first aligned the administrative process with the judicial process. The second part allowed the court to quash the easements if the credit was denied. We could have lived with the first piece, but the credit shouldn't have been the reason for the donation, and failure to receive the credit, or receiving a lower value for the credit shouldn't be reason enough to cancel the easement.

SB100 IMMUNITY FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP

(Sonnenberg, Landgraf)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SB100 provides additional protections from liability for volunteers and non-profit organizations involved in grant-funded construction or maintenance of recreational trails and amenities. It raises the threshold to gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.

SB73 PROMOTE RUNYON LAKES SWA

(Garcia, Valdez)

Position: Support as amended

Status: Passed

SB73 requires CPW to collaborate with Pueblo, the Pueblo Conservancy district, and public and private stakeholders to promote the maximum beneficial use and development. While collaborative management could reduce inefficiencies, and improve maintenance, "maximum beneficial development" is a very scary concept. After discussions with the sponsors, the bill was modified to be merely a legislative declaration encouraging all parties to work collaboratively.

WATER

***HB1219 EXTEND CWCB LEASE/FALLOW**

(Arndt, Donovan)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

Under current law, the CWCB manages a program allowing Ag producers to fallow a portion of their land, and lease the saved water to municipalities. The fallow land must remain in agricultural use, and the total water allowed for leasing is limited to a percentage of the associated water right, and cannot be leased more than three years out any ten year period. The program is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2018. HB1219 extends the program to December 31, 2023.

***HB1364 WATER CONSERVATION**

(Hansen)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

Current law requires counties to adopt master plans. Statutes declare those plans to be merely advisory, but do include a list of things counties might wish to consider in planning. One of those things is a water supply element.

HB1364 required that if a county incorporated a water supply element in its master plan, that element had to include water conservation. The bill further authorized counties to incorporate the criteria and goals of the water plan as part of their master plans. Finally, the bill provided counties specific authority to make the water conservation portion of their master plans enforceable as conditions for approval of development applications.

SB235 SEAPLANES

(Crowder, Melton)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB235 was similar to last year's bill, though significantly scaled back. It required CPW to create a pilot program on at least two State Parks for the landing of seaplanes. The bill did include language requiring seaplanes to undergo boat inspections at airports, but that was problematic, since CPW didn't have inspection sites at airports. Also, funding for CPW was critically low, and the ANS program was no exception. Additionally, a hat tip in the direction of alleviating the critical infrastructure issues around the ANS problem didn't do anything to mitigate the underlying fact that the bill sought to eliminate or seriously curtail public recreational use of at least two State Park reservoirs in favor of a very small minority who wished to land planes there. Stay tuned for another thrilling installment next year...

HB1190 ST JUDE'S

(KC Becker, Sonnenberg)

Position: Neutral

Status: Passed

HB1190 clarifies the *St Jude's v Roaring Fork Fishing Club* decision. The bill limits the applicability of the decision to private, direct flow rights for piscatorial, recreational or aesthetic benefit on private property, adjudicated after July 15, 2015. This means that the case does not apply to absolute or conditional rights adjudicated prior to 2015. It also means that the decision does not apply to reservoir releases for aesthetic, recreational or piscatorial benefit. As expected, the Senate Ag committee removed subsections b, c and d. With only subsection **a** remaining, the bill merely grandfathers existing water rights and agreements. The broad nature of the decision could still apply to future agreements for reservoir releases to benefit rivers. We are extremely disappointed that other members of the coalition, which has worked on this issue for two years, was so willing to jettison section b. What remains of the bill is essentially the status quo, and there is little to be gained from working against it.

HB1291 ALTERNATE STORAGE NOT CHANGE**(Arndt, Coram)**

Position: Neutral

Status: Passed

Current law allows water to be stored ONLY in the reservoir for which it is decreed. HB1291 allows water to be stored in any reservoir or aquifer so long as it is diverted from its decreed point of diversion, and losses due to transport are accounted for and approved by the State engineer. The bill is clearly intended to allow larger water providers (Northern and Denver) to move water around their systems without having to open themselves up in change cases. The trouble is they can already do this in large measure. There are some serious drawbacks for streams; and possibly some speculation issues if folks can move water without changing its point of storage in court. On the other hand, there is benefit to letting large utilities have some increased flexibility. After a great deal of discussion we were able to get most of the changes we needed in the bill.

HB1285 CDPHE FEE BILL**(Mitsch-Bush, Jahn)**

Position: Support

Status: Passed

HB1285 raises fees on water pollution/discharge permits by roughly 65%-85% across all the categories created in last year's bill. This bill is the result of several years of work and negotiation among an enormous group of stakeholders from both the regulated and the NGO communities.

SB282 RESERVOIR RELEASES FOR INSTREAM FLOW**(Sonnenberg, Esgar)**

Position: Monitor

Status: Dead

SB282 allowed the owner of a newly constructed or enlarged reservoir to dedicate releases from the reservoir to the CWCB for instream flow protection without having gone to water court for a change case. The bill prohibited diversion of the released water from the point of release until it passed out of the specified reach.

HB1273 LAND USE/ WATER CONSERVATION**(Hansen, Jones)**

Position: Support

Status: Dead

Current law defines a water supply as adequate for purposes of a local government's approval of a real estate development permit if it merely allows the inclusion of conservation measures.

HB1273 amended the definition to require “reasonable conservation measures and water demand management measures to reduce water needs and account for hydrologic variability, and prohibits the local government from approving the permit application unless the applicant demonstrates that appropriate water conservation and demand management measures have been included in the water supply plan”. The bill was further amended in the House to remain permissive in nature, but that was still too onerous for the Senate, which sent it to State Affairs, and promptly disposed of it.

HB1306 LEAD IN SCHOOLS**(Exum, Coram)**

Position: Support

Status: Passed

HB1306 directs the health department to establish a grant program for testing water in public schools for lead contamination. The grant program prioritizes the oldest elementary schools, followed by the oldest non-elementary schools, followed by all other public schools. CDPHE is authorized to use up to \$300,000 from the Water Quality Innovation fund; after all other obligations of the fund are met. The bill also appropriates an additional \$440,000 and 1 FTE to the department for the purpose. It's a great idea, but it's an uphill fight in the current fiscal climate.

HB1233 PROTECT HISTORIC CONSUMPTIVE USE

(Arndt, Crowder)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

When a water right owner wishes to change a water right, the amount of water that can be changed is limited to the historical consumptive use of the water right. Under current law, water rights in water divisions 4, 5, or 6 only are protected from loss of consumptive use claims for times during which the water right was subject to a recognized conservation program. HB1233 expands the protection to be statewide. The bill also modifies what constitutes a recognized conservation program by including conservation pilot programs; and limiting the state agencies which can implement a conservation program to those with explicit statutory jurisdiction over water rights or water conservation (essentially the CWCB and the State Engineer).

SB1248 CWCB PROJECTS

(Arndt, Sonnenberg)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

HB1248 is the annual projects bill. This year it includes several good provisions including \$5M for continuation of the watershed restoration program, and \$10M for implementation of the water plan which includes a million dollars for watershed health and a million dollars for long term conservation, and land use planning. **Note: Seaplanes here too!*

SB202 SPECIES CONSERVATION TRUST

(Coram, Esgar)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

SB202 is the annual appropriation of money from the Species Conservation Trust Fund. For 2017, the bill appropriates \$375,000 to aquatic wildlife, and the same for terrestrial wildlife. The bill also appropriates \$600,000 for implementation of the Platte River recovery program, and \$150,000 for removal of nonnative fish. The total allocation of \$1.5M is a glaring statement on the scarcity of funds in this year's budget.

HB1289 SEO RULES FOR CONSUMPTIVE USE

(Valdez, Crowder)

Position: Monitor

Status: Passed

As introduced, HB1289 directs the State Engineer to promulgate rules for a streamlined method of calculating Consumptive Use. The bill makes use of the alternative method completely optional on the part of the water rights owner, and gives no weight to the alternative in any judicial or administrative proceeding.

While the intent seems to be an alternative that might be less costly than the current calculation practice; the whole bill appears in a legislative declaration. Additionally, the explicit instruction that the new alternative be given no presumption seems to render the entire exercise an enormous expenditure of time and resources with no discernible benefit. In the Senate, the bill was made into an interim committee study, so we will get to talk about it all summer.

HJR1004 AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

(Mitsch-Bush, Baumgardner)

Position: Support

Status: Passed

In light of the current budget crisis, and the loss of tier 2 severance tax revenue, HJR1004 asks Congress to help fund implementation of CPW plans to control and eliminate aquatic nuisance species such as Quagga Mussels and Zebra Mussels.

SB49 EXEMPT DRAINS FROM PERMITS

(Gardner, Lundeen)

Position: Monitor

Status: Dead

Current law requires a permit from the groundwater commission to remove groundwater. SB49 eliminated that requirement if the groundwater was being drained as part of an industrial, residential, or commercial development, or utility lines to serve such development. The bill required that the water drained could not be used for any purpose

other than collection, and had to be discharged near the drainage site. SB49 could have seriously impacted natural wetlands or fens when they occurred near the site of drainage operations.

HB1008 GRAYWATER RESEARCH

(Arndt, Sonnenberg)

Position: mild Support

Status: Passed

HB1008 is an interim committee bill. Currently, CDPHE is authorized to regulate graywater usage. Existing regulations provide for limited nonpotable outdoor uses only. The bill allows an exemption to current CDPHE regulations on graywater usage for research facilities. There are several criteria which the facility must meet to qualify for the exemption. The bill is very limited in scope, but research to show safety associated with expanded graywater usage is a good thing.

SB117 INDUSTRIAL HEMP IS AG

(Coram, Valdez)

Position: Monitor

Status: Passed

SB117 clarifies that industrial hemp is included in the definition of agricultural crop, for the purposes of using a water right.

SB26 STATE ENGINEER STATUTORY CLEANUP

(Sonnenberg, Arndt)

Position: Monitor

Status: Passed

SB26 is a largely non-substantive cleanup of the statues for the State Engineer's office. The only significant change is the fee for rating certain types of water projects. Currently, the fee is assessed at \$25/day for expenses, and the bill changes that to a flat \$75 fee.

HB1030 UPDATE IRRIGATION DISTRICT STATUTES (Arndt, Sonnenberg)

Position: Neutral

Status: Passed

HB1030 is largely a cleanup of archaic and cumbersome language in the 1929 Irrigation District Act. The only potential trouble spot is that the bill allows irrigation districts to lease excess water for any beneficial use, not just for ag, power/mechanical, or domestic uses. As always, this provision allows leasing for instream uses, but also allows leasing for industrial use. It's probably not worth falling on our swords over, but it's always a little concerning.

HB1033 DREDGE SOUTH PLATTE RESERVOIRS (J Becker, Sonnenberg)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

Dredging Reservoirs is generally the least harmful environmental alternative for increasing storage capacity, and we would likely be fine with whatever dredging loans and grants CWCB opted to make. Bypassing the process, however, and allocating revenue to unspecified projects which may not be ready to proceed sets a poor precedent, however.

HB1033 directly bypassed the CWCB budget process and allocated \$5M from the construction fund for unspecified dredging projects in the South Platte basin

MISCELLANEOUS

HB1187 TABOR GROWTH CAP (Thurlow, Crowder)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

HB 1187 changed the TABOR growth cap. It allowed the state to retain and spend revenue up to the rate of personal income growth, rather than the rate of inflation. This was a much more realistic figure, and would have allowed the state to keep more money. The

bill would have required voter approval, as it increased revenue. The brilliance of HB1187 though, was that it amended Ref C, NOT TABOR, so it required only a simple majority for a statutory change, not the new higher standard for a constitutional change.

SB79 TIMEOUT FROM LEGISLATIVE CHANGE OF INITIATED LAWS (Court)

Position: Support

Status: Dead

SB79 prohibited the legislature from changing a citizen initiated statute for three years. There was an exception if the legislature achieved a two thirds majority for an amendment. The bill was a nice gesture, though three years was a pretty short window.

SB54 TAX CHECKOFF ROTATION (Court, Wilson)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

SB54 created a 5 year on, 5 year off schedule for tax checkoffs. It required that a new bill be run every five years in order to get back on the form. The bill also capped donations at the amount of the taxpayer's refund.

HB1161 TIF TRANSPARENCY (Beckman)

Position: Monitor

Status: Dead

HB1161 required municipalities who use tax increment financing to report to other taxing entities each year. The report had to include the total amount of all increments, the entities from whom the incremental taxes were collected, how the funds were spent, and how much "protected" revenue still existed that could be used for financing. The bill also required the municipality to have a CPA certify that all revenues were spent appropriately. If any revenues were inappropriately spent, the bill made the municipality liable for repayment of the lost revenue to other taxing authorities.

HB1016 EXCLUDE MINERAL REVENUE VALUE FROM TIF (Gray, Saine)

Position: Monitor

Status: Passed

HB1016 is an attempt to stop the hemorrhaging of tax revenue for school districts. It permits urban renewal districts to exclude the value of mineral resources (oil/gas, coal, gold, etc) from property tax assessments for the purpose of tax increment financing (TIF). This means that the assessed valuation under a TIF would be lower, and school districts would require less backfilling would be required from the State. Less backfilling might alleviate some of the perpetual shortfalls surrounding State education funding.

HB1171 NEW TRANS NOTES (Carver)

Position: Oppose

Status: Dead

HB1171 required a vote of the people to approve new TRANS bonds for highway construction. The bond would have been repaid by dedicating ten percent of existing sales and use taxes for highway capital construction.

So that's it for this year. In a nutshell, we stopped or fixed every bad bill that came through and there were some pretty horrifying concepts introduced. We also successfully shepherded a few important bills across the finish line; including the extension of the nongame checkoff, the projects bill, the species conservation trust fund bill, and the expansion of the lease/fallow program. We also helped with a few other bills such as the lead in schools and the creation of a pollinator highway, which will help increase public awareness. The loss of the energy office, and the CPW sustainability bill were tough, but stay tuned, there's always next year.

In the meantime, enjoy fledging season and the gorgeous Colorado summer!

See you in the fall -

Jen