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ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SHOWS SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCE OF ANTI-FRACKING BALLOT MEASURES

93,000 jobs, \$12 Billion in gross domestic product, and \$985 Million in state and local revenues would be lost if proposed bans on hydraulic fracturing in Colorado become law, according to a new economic study by the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business. Three quarters of those losses would be felt in just the first 5 years of the ban.

The study assessed a series of ballot questions proposed for November's ballot which seek to impose a statewide ban on hydraulic fracturing. Currently, there are a number of locally-based fracking bans that have been approved by voters in recent months, including Fort Collins and Longmont. It is estimated that 90% of oil and gas wells today are fracked.

Indirect economic impacts of a fracking ban would extend to the far-reaching supply chain and the sectors that supply the energy industry with equipment and other services.

The study was based on a new dynamic modeling system established to measure the economic impact of public policy changes. A similar economic analysis was conducted on the education reform initiative last fall, Amendment 66.

CONNECT FOR HEALTH AUDIT KILLED

Despite receiving a near-unanimous vote in the State House of Representatives and ongoing questions of its expenditures, a Senate committee killed a measure to ensure a comprehensive audit of Colorado's Health Care Exchange, Connect for Health Colorado.

Connect for Health Colorado, was created in 2011 by the Legislature as a state-chartered nonprofit internet health insurance marketplace to comply with ObamaCare's requirement for a state level health care exchange with the intention of giving individuals and small businesses more buying power and to slow the increasing costs of health care. In recent months, the exchange has come under fire for a variety of decisions including the request of executive director Patty Fontneau for a raise late last year while sign ups in the exchange were well below projections.

Representative Dan Norberg (R-Colorado Springs) sought to expand the authority of the Colorado Legislative Audit Committee over Connect for Health to conduct a performance audit which would allow it to examine operational issues and assess where financial projections of sustainability for the organization were accurate.

Last week, Democrats on the Senate Health and Human Services Committee voted along party lines to kill the measure despite its passage on a 60-1 vote in the House. Committee Chair Senator Irene Aguilar, noted that Fontneau persuaded her that the four performance audits conducted on the exchange by a private firm in the last year had been sufficient look at its operations.