



UNDER THE DOME

WITH THE NCLA

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NCLA BOARD MEETS WITH NORTHERN COLORADO LEGISLATORS AND ENGAGES IN FIRST BILLS ON LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The NCLA Board of Directors made its way to the State Capitol to meet with members of the northern Colorado Legislative delegation last week about NCLA's legislative agenda for 2015. The conversation focused upon funding of the north I-25 corridor, business personal property tax, water infrastructure, and general business issues.

The NCLA engaged in a dialogue about the key issues facing the region and the state with House Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso (R-Loveland), House Appropriations Chair and member of the Joint Budget Committee Dave Young (D-Greeley), Senate Local Government Committee Chair Vicki Marble, (R-Windsor), Representative Perry Buck (R-Windsor), Rep. Joann Ginal (D-Fort Collins), newly elected Senator John Cooke (R-Greeley), and Representative Lori Saine (R-Erie).

The Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance Board of Directors took their first positions on newly introduced legislation affecting the northern Colorado business community. Transportation, water, oil and gas, and labor issues were among the first of over 50 bills the NCLA Board of Directors will consider during the course of the 120-day legislative session.

The NCLA Board endorsed House Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso's (R-Loveland) [HB 15-1109](#) related to transportation funding from the state's general fund. The bill proposes to assure 5 years of transportation funding by modifying an existing funding formula. The funding formula would have generated over \$200 Million in state revenue for statewide transportation projects but the funds were lost as a consequence of quirky funding formula triggered during times of strong economic and revenue growth. The fix will assure that funding to transportation will flow in years in which such formula isn't triggered. A House committee will consider the bill this week.

In support of the regions agriculture interests, the NCLA Board supported HB 15-1013, which implements recommendations of the South Platte Aquifer Study. The bill allows two pilot projects, one near Gilcrest or LaSalle and the other near Sterling, to test alternative methods of lowering the water table in areas along the South Platte River that are experiencing damaging high groundwater levels.

The NCLA opted to oppose SB 15-008, which proposes to develop a state-based training program for local government land use planners on best water management practices. The bill, the NCLA Board concluded, was duplicative of existing water conservation efforts in land use planning.

A few bills have been introduced on oil and gas, setting the stage for robust debate on the important industry to the Northern Colorado region. The NCLA Board took positions in support of two bills that propose to appropriately compensate mineral owners should local government policies interfere with their property right. SB 15-93 proposes to set into motion a process for mineral owners to be compensated in any circumstance in which any ordinance or regulation has the effect of reducing the fair market value of an owner's mineral interest by at least 60%, which is then deemed a "taking". Windsor Representative Perry Buck (R) introduced HB 15-1119 which takes a direct shot at local government bans on hydraulic fracturing and deems local governments liable to the royalty owner for the value in lost royalties.

As it is structured, the 23-member NCLA Board of Directors is granted full public policy making authority by its five member organizations boards of Directors, including the Fort Collins, Loveland and Greeley Chambers of Commerce with the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation and Upstate Colorado Economic Development. The granted authority makes the NCLA very nimble and responsive to the fast moving pace of the granted legislature. Positions taken by the Board are actively communicated to the northern Colorado legislative delegation and legislative leaders.

