

Heavy Hearts, Gun Control and Build Back Stronger Transportation and Labor Issues

The tragedy that shook our community this week will forever impact the ten families and the rest of us as we mourn the senseless loss of those victims. Our state once again has been the subject of national media coverage of violence.



[Tribute](#)

As a result, there have been many discussions around gun control at the Capitol this week. Currently, there are two measures ([SB078 - Lost or Stolen Firearms](#) and [HB1106- Safe Storage of Firearms](#)) that will no doubt be passed into law, and we anticipate probably seeing more gun control measures introduced. Rep. McKean's [Gun Transfer Background Check Permit Exemption](#) was postponed indefinitely.

Build Back Stronger Economic Recovery Listening Tour

The Governor and lawmakers will conduct a broad listening tour across the state about how to spend the available \$3.9 Billion in federal stimulus funds. Northern Colorado will have its turn on Tuesday, March 30, from 6-7:30 PM. [Please sign up to be a part of the conversation.](#)

NCLA supports investments of these one-time dollars in transportation and a refilling of the Unemployment Interest Trust Fund to assure all businesses across the state are not subject to an automatic UI Trust Fund Premium Tax that was triggered by the significant draw on unemployment insurance caused by the pandemic and government required closures and reductions in services, in addition to the substantial fraud also drawing upon the trust fund.. The Governor, Treasurer, and Legislature are asking for comments through the feedback form that is also included in the link. We encourage you to share your thoughts and support the NCLA position.

Transportation

The much-anticipated [Transportation "Plan"](#) was released by Majority Leadership last week. The NCLA continues our work with sponsors and the Governor's office to structure a plan that works to the economic benefit of the region and the state. Our initial analysis of the measure, however, elevates some of the following concerns:

- The plan falls short of funding the \$500M/year for the 10-Year State Transportation Plan.
- No net new dollars from the state General Fund towards the plan
- The plan lacks equity for all users of the road
- The impact to rural Colorado and agriculture is disproportionate relative to urban area.
- Structure not necessarily modern nor "future proof."
- No financing option to leverage low-interest rates for substantial investment in years beyond 2023.

The NCLA is happy to report that a formal [unsolicited bid](#) has been submitted to CDOT by Roadis, in conjunction with Horrocks Engineers, for the development and funding of the completion of improvements to the north I-25 corridor from Denver to Fort Collins, including in particular, the completion of the Express Lane System contemplated for the corridor. This will be a public-private partnership and we will be assessing the proposal in the coming weeks.

Priority Legislation

SB 76 -[Agricultures Worker's Right](#) still awaits the Senate Appropriations Committee, but in the meantime, Jaime Henning, Bill Jerke and Sandra Hagen Solin met with Representative Mary Young last week. Rep. Young is a House co-sponsor of the measure and she has indicated that she is open to changes. The agriculture community is currently working to defeat the measure or secure significant amendments to reflect the unique nature of the agriculture industry.

HB21-1232- [Standardized Health Benefit Plan Colorado Option](#) bill (Public Options) was introduced this week and scheduled for the House. Health & Insurance committee on March 31. The bill requires the commissioner of insurance to establish a standardized health benefit plan to be offered by health insurance carriers in the individual and small group markets. The NCLA Board of Directors will take up the measure during their board meeting this week to consider our position on the bill.

SB21-176-[Protecting Opportunities and Workers' Rights Act](#)- The NCLA is strongly opposed to SB 176 as the measure truly is onerous to business, especially small business, with its significant expansion of liability for employers with provisions including (and these are only a couple) making employers liable for the actions of an independent contractor despite employers inability to exercise direct control or supervision over an IC and the broad definition of "hostile work environment" to include anything that "*undermines a person's sense of well-being.*"

The Senate Judiciary Committee will take up the measure on April 1st. The NCLA will provide testimony in the committee. The list of business groups opposed to the bill continues to grow.

The Regulatory Front

We continue to monitor the CDPHE/AQCC- Employer Trip Reduction Program rule making process and have been engaged in their series of [ETRP Listening sessions](#). The NCLA and Chambers remain opposed to the draft rules as they currently stand and encourage the rules to move towards a voluntary compliance rather than mandated for employers with 100 employees or more. We encourage all members to be aware of this rulemaking, one of several outcomes of the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Roadmap. While the scheduled listening session concluded this week, there are still avenues for the business community to [submit their comments](#). These comments will lead up to Draft Rule language in the AQCC May hearings when the formal request for rulemaking occurs. The rulemaking will happen during the August 19-20 AQCC hearings.

NCLA continues to stay engaged during this rulemaking process and will contemplate filing party status once the Request for Rulemaking is filed.

NCLA Tracking Report

On a bi-weekly basis, the NCLA Board reviews and considers its position on pending legislation. See the [NCLA 2021 Legislative Tracking Report](#) for a listing of the measures thus far introduced that the NCLA is monitoring and upon which the NCLA will or has taken a position.