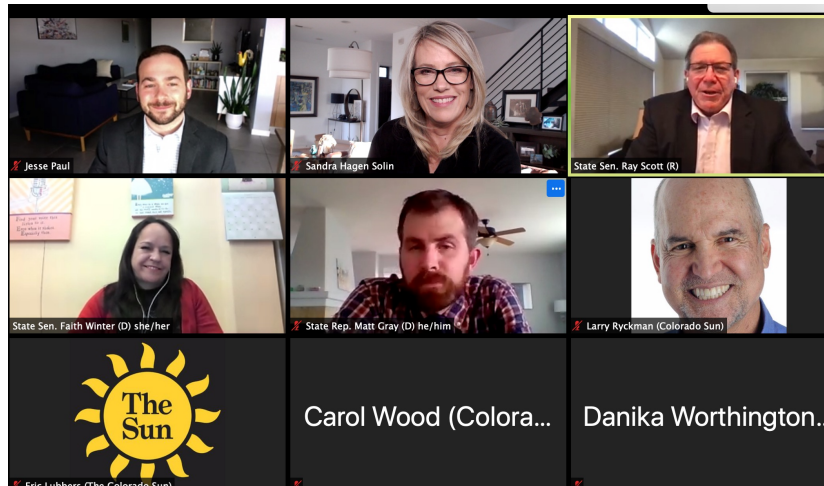


## The Long-Anticipated Transportation Bill Arrives Front Range Rail, Public Option One month to go...

With a recess insight, there is momentum to have major legislation measures introduced and pushed through. Finally, this week the much-anticipated draft language was released for the [Sustainability of Transportation System](#) bill (SB 263). Additional information about this measure is detailed later in this update. Additionally, the public option legislation has been re-engaged with amendments.

### The Road Ahead: A Transportation Conversation

Ahead of the release of the SB 263, *The Colorado Sun* hosted a virtual event on transportation funding in Colorado. NCLA's Sandra Hagen Solin joined an esteemed panel that included Transportation Committee Chairs Representative Matt Gray and Senator Faith Winter with Senate Transportation Committee Ranking Republican Senator Ray Scott and moderator, Sun Capitol Reporter Jesse Paul. View the event [here](#).



### [Congressional Letter requesting \\$660M for North I-25 Express Lane Project](#)

Fix North I-25 Business Alliance, a powerful subcommittee of the NCLA, sent a joint letter with the North I-25 Coalition to US Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, and Congressmen Joe Neguse, Ken Buck and Ed Perlmutter requesting direct funding of the \$660M shortfall to complete the North I-25 Express Lanes project from the Biden Infrastructure Investment Plan - the American Jobs Plan. The request encouraged the Congressional delegation to join forces for a coordinated Congressional delegation push to position the North I-25 Corridor among the key state and nationally strategic transportation corridors for funding from any available funds that could become accessible with the passage of a stimulus transportation/infrastructure investment package, including the Biden Infrastructure Investment Plan. The NCLA's Fix North I-25 Alliance was joined by the North I-25 Coalition and nearly 40 local governments, legislators representing northern Colorado and business organizations.

"We are so close to completing the \$1.6 billion North I-25 Express Lanes project, but need just north of \$660 million to get it across the finish line," said Ann Hutchison, President/CEO of the Fort Collins Chamber. "It is incumbent on our leaders in Washington, DC, to pick up the mantle and get this project to completion and we are eager to align with them to secure the federal funding needed to do exactly that and keep Northern Colorado thriving." The Northern I-25 Coalitions submitted a letter to Colorado's Congressional delegation

requesting direct federal funding of the \$660M shortfall to complete the North I-25 Express Lanes project from the Biden Infrastructure Investment Plan - the American Jobs Plan.

### **Rep. Jeni Arndt (Fort Collins) Vacancy Filled**

With the vacancy of the House District 53 seat due to Rep Jeni Arndt's election as Mayor of Fort Collins, we have a new voice for northern Colorado, Representative [Andrew Boesenecker](#), from West Fort Collins. He was appointed last week to fill the vacancy and will represent House District 53. We look forward to meeting Rep. Boesenecker during our upcoming NCLA Board Meeting and working with him on behalf of the NCLA business community.

### **Front Range Rail Passes Committee**

[SB21-238](#). – AMEND - Thanks to Tom Norton and Ryan Fertrig of Vestas for sharing with the Senate Transportation and Energy Committee NCLA's concerns with the Front Range Rail proposal. With [four amendments](#), the bill passed out of committee to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Further conversations will be had to influence the language of this bill.

### **Employee Traffic Reduction Program (ETriP) Update – Comments to influence Draft Rule Language**

The NCLA submitted formal written comments to influence the ETRP rulemaking language. The comments submitted requests conversion of a mandated system around ETRP to instead have these requirements be a voluntary in nature. This voluntary measure would then be best structured to provide incentivizes by the state for the behavior modification sought. While we are not terribly optimistic the Division will implement our comments, they put the Division on notice that the business community plans on being fully engaged during the upcoming GHG Transportation rulemaking.

### **At Long Last - Transportation Bill is here**

After months of conversations, a draft of the much-anticipated bill has been released. The 190 page bill includes several NCLA requested changes to the concept released earlier in the session regarding the funding and spending of transportation-related monies. A number of new, more problematic policy provisions were added. We are digging into the details of the measure and will take the issue to the NCLA Board for action.

The Governor's Office held an [informational presentation](#) to the A Way Forward Coalition and provided comparisons to the PowerPoint presentation and the draft bill language. An article written in the [Denver Business Journal](#) included comments by NCLA that the bill "shifts the transportation funding dialogue of years past from just funding to now include spending to address climate change." At this point, there is a high level of concern for this legislation, and NCLA will continue to be fully engaged in conversations.

### **Priority Legislation**

[HB21-1232](#)- OPPOSE - [Standardized Health Benefit Plan CO Option](#) - Began its move to the House Floor for second reading this week. With the strike below amendments, the Colorado Hospital Association is now in a neutral position. The revised version of the bill will provide the commissioner of insurance to establish a standardized health benefit plan by rule to be offered by health insurance carriers in the individual and small group markets. Eliminating the government health plan and encourages private plans. There is a two-year window for implementation and a review further out. The revised bill provides premium reduction benchmark requirements. Several organizations remained opposed, including the NCLA. The bill is currently scheduled for the House Appropriations Committee on May 4.

[SB21-200](#). -OPPOSE - [Reduce Greenhouse Gases Increase Environmental Justice](#)-Directs the AQCC to accelerate the GHG emissions reduction program by intensifying the goals and shortening the date those goals must be met. As this bill passed out of the Senate Finance Committee, with the deciding vote being Sen. Lee, opposition continues to grow. This week the Governor threatened a veto of this bill if it makes it to his desk. NCLA, joining forces with Platte River Power Authority and Weld County, is pursuing tactics to defeat the measure in the Senate. The bill is currently waiting to be scheduled in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[SB21-087](#) - [Agricultural Workers' Rights](#) - NCLA Board member Bill Jerke, Greeley Chamber Pres/CEO Jaime Henning, and NCLA's Sandra Hagen Solin visited with the Farm Bureau to develop further strategies to build amendments for this bill that is currently very damaging to our agricultural industry. Sen. Danielson will be meeting with some farmers and bankers in hopes of facilitating further conversations.

**Legislative and Congressional Redistricting**

The Congressional redistricting continues to unfold and public engagement is encouraged. Comments are being taken by the [Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions](#) both for the State's redistricting and the Congressional redistricting. The next meeting will be held on May 3 and can be watched [here](#). Please submit your comment to the Commission on these very important redistricting processes.

**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.