



Under the Dome, Week 7

Highlights of the Week

The legislature enjoyed a short week thanks to President's Day weekend. It is the last break the legislature will see until Sine Die unless, as is tradition, the House and Senate take off Good Friday. Having just passed the 75-day mark of session, and a rumored 250 bills to still be introduced, it is promising to be busy. The House State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, however, did not have a light week. On Wednesday, they met until midnight hearing two controversial bills – HB 1124 which held local governments liable to mineral interest owners for the value of money not received due to an oil and gas moratoriums and HB 1134 which aimed to hold local governments and politicians liable for adopting “sanctuary” policies. Both bills brought out strong opinions and emotions from proponents and opponents. After ten and a half hours, HB 1124 and HB 1134 were killed on 3-6 votes with all Democrats on the State Affairs Committee opposing the bills. Additionally, the Senate Transportation Committee killed Representative Benavidez and Senator Moreno's bill to require the Colorado Department of Transportation to only hire contractors on P3 projects that pay prevailing wages. CDOT testified that they already require this of contractors on public private partnership projects, and the bill was killed on a party line vote.

Actions by Colorado's Attorney General are having a direct impact on usually mundane legislative supplemental budget bills. Last week, Attorney General Cynthia Coffman filed a law suit against Boulder County for failing to rescind their oil and gas moratorium before the February 10th deadline which marks five years of the oil and gas moratorium Boulder put in place in 2012. In May 2016, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that local moratoriums longer than five years are illegal. As a result of the lawsuit, many Democrat representatives joined Republicans to block the Attorney General's supplemental budget request. SB 165 died on a vote of 44-20. The AG's office has introduced two new bills (SB 196 and SB 197) in an attempt to receive the funding they need to make it through the rest of the fiscal year.

The Senate Business Committee took up the first of two bills related to regulation of “social pot clubs.” SB 063 creates a marijuana consumption license. After a long day of testimony, the committee decided to lay the bill over for action only until next week when another bill is being heard to regulate marijuana social clubs – SB 184. SB 184 doesn't create a license for marijuana social clubs but instead sets up minimum requirements to operate a club within a local jurisdiction that has authorize clubs to operate. Colorado continues to navigate the

unchartered territory of recreational marijuana regulation despite hints this week from the new administration that they may start to target states that allow legal recreational marijuana.

Bills of the Week

Local Government TIFs and BIDs This week the House Business Committee considered two bills to change TIF and Business Improvement District (BID) law. HB 1161 by freshman Representative Beckman required that urban renewal authorities using TIF provide a report that includes information about TIF revenue collected in the previous year, the taxing entities affected, how revenues were spent, projected TIF revenues for the upcoming year, and progress made on urban renewal projects. Various organizations testified in support including the Colorado Fiscal Institute and Americans for Prosperity. The Colorado Municipal League was opposed. Although committee members said they believed in transparency, the bill died on a 3-10 vote. HB 1167 by Representative Leonard tried to change the requirements for creating BID. Under current law, a municipality may include in a business improvement district (BID) geographic areas in which new businesses or new commercial development may occur, but in which no current business is located. HB 1167 bill required that any area included in a BID have existing businesses. The bill was opposed by CML, the Special Districts Association, and the Colorado Association of Homebuilders. It died on a 2-10 vote.

Small Cell Permitting HB17-1193 was introduced this week by Representative Kraft Tharp and Representative Jon Becker. The bill clarifies that an expedited permitting process for broadband facilities applies to small cell facilities and networks. It also requires local governments to process an application for a small cell facility within 90 days of receiving the application. It was assigned to the House Business Committee and will be heard in committee on Tuesday.

Modern Technology in Public Schools In a show of bipartisanship, Speaker Duran and President Grantham joined together to sponsor HB17-1184. The bill requires the State Board of Education to incorporate into the Colorado Academic Standards skills relating to the use of information and communications technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. HB 1184 also requires the Department of Education to create and maintain a resource bank of materials pertaining to computer science course material and programs for optional use by schools and school districts. The bill is scheduled for its first hearing in the House Education Committee on Monday.

Combatting Opioid Addiction in Colorado This year several different bills have been brought forward to deal with the growing opioid crisis facing our state and the nation. SB 193 by Senator Lundberg and Senator Jahn creates the center for research into prevention strategies and treatment of substance abuse at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. University of Colorado's President Bruce Benson testified in support along with the Attorney General's Office among others. The bill passed the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and will next be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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