March 24, 2014

***http://www.coloradocapitolwatch.com/bill-tracker-votes/0/391/2014/0/***

“These are my new shoes.  They’re good shoes.  They won’t make you rich like me, they won’t make you rebound like me, they definitely won’t make you handsome like me.  They’ll only make you have shoes like me.  That’s it.”

—Charles Barkley

**Happy March Madness!**

**Days until Sine Die:  44**

*Axiom thanks the many news sources from which we gather relevant stories for our weekly newsletter.  In most cases you will be able to read the full text article for each headline below by clicking on the link provided.  The purpose of this format is to share newsworthy items while ensuring we adhere to copyright law.*

**“Public Trust Resources” Ballot Initiative**

Proposed Initiative #103 – Public Trust Resources – would essentially turn  Colorado’s longstanding system of water management on its head.   The initiative defines clean air, clean water, and the preservation of the environment and natural resources as “public trust resources” that are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come.  It provides that the state, as trustee of these resources, must conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.  The initiative would be potentially devastating to the Colorado economy, upending the water and property rights necessary for all functions of the state.  Initiative #103 is now one step closer to the ballot, recently surviving the review and comment process.  It will now be considered by the Title setting board in the Secretary of State’s office.  [Click here](http://www.leg.state.co.us/LCS/Initiative%20Referendum/1314InitRefr.nsf/acd7e51d3fc2b60b87257a3700571f9f/f40fa17e3fc9b7eb87257c99004e8989?OpenDocument) for the full text of the initiative.

**Bill Pushing Study of Oil and Gas Health Impacts Aired in Committee**

*Denver Post*

The push for a study on the health impacts of oil and gas drilling drew support at a legislative hearing Thursday from local and state officials - and even some from the industry.  However, other members of the business communities questioned the need and opposed the bill because it targets a particular industry.  The measure creating the health study, HB 14-1297, is sponsored by Rep. Joann Ginal, D-Fort Collins.  The bill was laid over until next week, for amendments and a vote.  [Click here](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_25388196/bill-pushing-study-oil-and-gas-health-impacts#axzz2wRoEbJ7P) to read more

**Colorado Lawmakers Target Telecom Reform and $54 Million Phone Subsidy**

*Denver Post*

A bipartisan group of Colorado of lawmakers on last week threw support behind a package of bills that aim to modernize the state's outdated telecom laws and encourage carriers to build high-speed Internet networks in rural and unserved areas.  Though the measures have been in the works for years, it's still unclear how many communities or residents would benefit from the broadband push and advocates for the elderly are concerned that the measures would hurt those who rely on their landline phone as an essential service.  [Click here](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_25388130/colorado-lawmakers-target-telecom-reform-and-54-million?source=rss#axzz2wRoEbJ7P) to read more.

**Rep. DelGrosso Passes Highway Funding Bill Out of Committee**

*Colorado House Republicans*

Late last week the House Transportation & Energy Committee passed Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso’s (R-Loveland) bill, HB 14-1259, which will transfer $100 million in one-time monies from the General Fund to rebuild roads and bridges across Colorado. The bill passed out of committee 11-2.

In 2009, Democrats repealed the diversion of excess General Fund for transportation projects. As a result, more than a billion dollars that otherwise would have been spent on rebuilding roads and bridges has been spent in other areas.  HB 14-1259 now moves to the House Appropriations committee where it has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.

**Bill to Protect Colorado Consumers in Mortgage Default Advances**

*Denver Post*

A bill to give Colorado mortgage borrowers greater protections against foreclosure as they try to catch up on payments passed the state House Committee on Business, Labor, Economic and Workforce Development last week.  HB 14-1295, sponsored by Rep. Beth McCann, D-Denver, would prevent lenders from pushing ahead with a foreclosure sale while working with delinquent borrowers on a loan modification at the same time.  [Click here](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_25369080/bill-protect-colorado-consumers-mortgage-default-advances?source=rss) to read more.

**Student Success Act Clears First House Hurdle**

*Colorado House of Representatives*

The Student Success Act, a bipartisan education funding and priorities package, passed its first legislative test last week in the House Education Committee.  HB14-1292, sponsored by Reps. Millie Hamner (D-Dillon) and Carole Murray (R-Castle Rock), has 35 cosponsors, including Speaker Mark Ferrandino (D-Denver) and Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso (R-Loveland). It establishes bipartisan education priorities and commits additional one-time and ongoing funding to Colorado’s public K-12 schools, which were hit by severe budget cuts during the Great Recession.

Significant stakeholder discussions resulted in amendments, approved by the Education Committee, to:

·      Direct the state Department of Education to start reporting the distribution of the charter school mill levy (intended to answer calls for greater understanding of the proportionate shares of local education funding).

·      Ensure movement toward greater financial transparency in education spending, while relieving our smallest rural districts -- those with a single K-12 school site -- from the obligation to break down this financial data between elementary, middle and high school programming.

·      Maintain the bill’s commitment to English Language Learners programs, while simplifying the reporting requirements to focus on outcomes and student proficiency in core academic areas.

·      Add teacher recruitment as an acceptable use of money allocated from the implementation fund, a $40 million one-time appropriation to help school districts implement current reform mandates.

·      Expand the list of uses of implementation fund dollars to include development of Student Learning Objectives, a mechanism to measure teacher impact on student learning.

**2012 Mexico Trade Mission Brings Opportunity for Colorado Potato Farmers**

*Office of the Governor*

Gov. John Hickenlooper and the Colorado Department of Agriculture announced last Wednesday that Mexico has published new rules that permit expanded access to the Mexican market for U.S. fresh potatoes.  This will allow producers in Colorado, particularly those in the San Luis Valley, to increase potato exports to Mexico.

Colorado agricultural exports continue to grow, nearly doubling since 2009.  Mexico is Colorado’s second-largest agricultural export market.  This step by Mexico will further strengthen that relationship, not only increasing exports of Colorado fresh potatoes to that country, but also potentially opening more opportunities for Colorado agriculture in general.

Hickenlooper led a trade mission to Mexico in 2012 that focused on opening Mexico’s interior market for potatoes. To date, only areas along the border have been accessible to U.S. potatoes. During the 2012 visit, the governor and Salazar met with Mexican President Felipe Calderon to press the case for potato market expansion. The trade mission supported ongoing industry efforts to promote Colorado products in Mexico and helped to lay the foundation for this significant action by Mexico.

Expanded exports of fresh potatoes could have a positive economic impact of $30 million for Colorado.  Shipments of Colorado potatoes increased 26 percent between 2012 and 2013. In addition, the export value of Colorado potatoes sold to Mexico grew to $23 million in 2013 from $17 million in 2012.

**Colorado Innovation Network Announces New Board Members**

*Office of Economic Development & International Trade*

The Colorado Innovation Network (COIN) last week announced four new board members will join its thought leaders. The COIN board of advisors represents stakeholders of Colorado's innovation ecosystem, including industry, startups, higher education, research labs and government. The board meets quarterly to serve as an advocate for the organization and encourage dialogue to advance the goals of COIN.

The new COIN board members are:

·      **Brian Burke** -Burke serves as the Vice President of Field Integrations at Charles Schwab, with more than 20 years of experience in financial services, strategy, operations, marketing, business development and executive level management in a Fortune 500 company.

·      **Phil DiStefano** - Dr. DiStefano has served CU-Boulder for 40 years. As Chancellor, he works closely with students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, governing officials, business and community leaders in extending CU's legacy as a preeminent national comprehensive research university.

·      **Robin Pringle** -Pringle serves as the Vice President of Corporate Development at Liberty Media Corporation. She is responsible for identifying investment opportunities in the media, technology and eCommerce arenas. She also helps lead the Women's eCommerce Network, which  provides an opportunity for female entrepreneurs to enhance and improve their businesses.

·      **David Thompson** -Thompson serves as the Executive Vice President of Global Operations and Chief Information Officer at Western Union, where he is responsible for building and developing the IT infrastructure to support the next generation of payment products and services. He also is responsible for maximizing efficiency, quality and customer delivery for the company's global Agent network.

COIN is a catalyst for economic prosperity through innovation by partnering with government, business and civil society to foster collaboration around global ideas, talent, capital and the entrepreneurial spirit. Cultivating innovation and ideas is key to creating new jobs and growing a more competitive and resilient economy in Colorado. COIN is a public-private partnership and a division of OEDIT.

Visit [www.coloradoinnovationnetwork.com](http://www.coloradoinnovationnetwork.com) for more information and a full list of COIN's board of advisors.

**Owen Hill Ends U.S. Senate Run, Will Back Cory Gardner**

*Colorado Springs Gazette*

Less than three weeks after Colorado State Sen. Owen Hill refused to give up his bid for a U.S. Senate seat, Hill is leaving the race and will give his support to U.S. Representative Cory Gardner.  Hill, of Colorado Springs, said in late February that Gardner used "corruption and backroom deals" to pressure him out of the running. Last week though, Hill said that "unity within the Republican Party" will be needed to gain back control of the Senate.  [Click here](http://gazette.com/owen-hill-ends-u.s.-senate-run-will-back-cory-gardner/article/1516639) to read more.

**McFadyen Pulls out of Race**

*Pueblo Chieftain*

Pueblo County Commissioner Liane "Buffie" McFadyen has stepped away from her candidacy for the 3rd Congressional District.  McFadyen sent a letter to Democratic Party chairs Friday afternoon, announcing her withdrawal from the race to unseat Republican incumbent Scott Tipton in November.  [Click here](http://www.chieftain.com/news/politics/2390636-120/mcfadyen-pages-pageset-pagesetid) to read more.

**The Calculator**

House Bills Introduced:  335

Senate Bills Introduced:  166

Number of Bills PI’d:  110