

Sustaining Rural Colorado

Sen Sonnenberg, Sen Guzman / Rep K Becker

The financial stability in rural Colorado continues to erode while the rest of the state enjoys a growing economy. With the decline in agriculture, the loss of property tax valuations and the mandates by the Federal Government, rural areas now face challenges through no fault of their own.

History

- Although there are more lane-miles in rural areas of the state, the vast majority of the transportation dollars are spent in the populated areas of the state allowing the infrastructure in rural parts of the state to continue to decline. For example, only 1% of the entire Tier 1 Transportation priority list is spent in the Southeast region of the state east of the I-25 corridor.
- The inconsistency of K-12 education funding in rural areas of the state has led to the inability to plan for the future in these school districts or to create programs to hire and retain good educators.
- The mandates on health care by the federal government have led to unintended consequences that now threaten the closure of rural hospitals and the elimination of critical health care. These unintended consequences have led to some of these hospital boards to direct their staff to prepare a plan to close their facility over the next couple of years.

What the bill does

- Secures \$100 million to bond \$1.3 billion for transportation projects in which 25% of that money would be required to be spent in counties with populations of 50,000 or less.
- Secures money to capital construction to take care of long neglected controlled maintenance in our state buildings.
- Requires Department of Health Care Policy and Finance to present to the committees of reference a detailed report on how they spend the over \$45 million in administration costs.
- Allocates money to increase funding in schools classified as rural and small rural schools.
- Moves the Colorado Healthcare Affordability Program to an enterprise to minimize the unintended consequences of the federal government health care mandates and does so following TABOR by lowering the state revenue cap by \$670.3 million.
- Requires the implementation of the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program and the ACE Kids Act which are Medicaid reform programs.
- Requires each state agency to reduce their budget by 2%.