

Good morning, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,
My name is Jack Regenbogen, and I am the Deputy Director of the Colorado Poverty Law Project. We are a nonprofit that supports renters and mobile homeowners through free legal assistance and advocacy. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 183.

We appreciate that this bill would ensure compliance with the US Supreme Court decision in *Tyler v. Hennepin County*, while allowing time for a more thoughtful consideration of long-term reforms. As such, we appreciate the temporary moratorium proposed in this bill, as well as the Task Force this bill would create. We hope that this Task Force will earnestly consider reforms to ensure that mobile home owners have equitable access to the same redemption opportunities that are afforded to all other homeowners.

We also appreciate the Senate amendment that included a pause on interest from accruing for the duration of the moratorium. This will help ensure that homeowner's debts do not continue to grow while the Task Force considers potential reforms.

We appreciate the sponsors for bringing this bill, and we appreciate you for your thoughtful consideration today. Please support Senate Bill 183, and thank you for your consideration.

Gratefully,
-Jack Regenbogen

Representatives Froelich and Lindsay:

I am writing this to you on behalf of the Strasburg Fire Protection District asking for your support on SB24-194.

Our District is located on I-70 east of Aurora and covers 262 square miles. We are somewhat unique though in that our District is split between Adams and Arapahoe Counties. From a funding point of view, we are able to collect a nominal Impact Fee from Adams County projects due to a County Ordinance, however, there is no corresponding authorization from Arapahoe County. This fee though, which can only be used for capital assets, does not go very far. In the last five years we have collected only \$350,000.00 in Impact Fees, primarily due to lack of commercial construction. This would barely cover the cost of a new ambulance with all of its equipment, let alone a full-sized fire truck which can cost upwards of 750K to a million dollars.

This reality puts us in a difficult spot with regards to serving our citizens. Due to the lack of volunteer firefighters in our local communities, we have been forced to increase our career staffing. That is inherently difficult though as we are not able to compete with the suburban departments in terms of salary and benefits, so staff retention is a major issue. In the last 2-years alone we have turned over 83% of our career staff.

So, our conundrum is this.

- We are using what Impact Fees we can collect to acquire assets that serve both Adams and Arapahoe Counties..
- As the impact fees are not sufficient to cover our capital needs, we are forced to utilize operational funds for this purpose.
- The use of the operational funds for this purpose then limits what we can do in terms of salaries and benefits for career staff.

SB-194 would give our District the flexibility to look for other revenue sources beyond just property tax, flexibility that is critical to our ability to effectively and safely serve our citizens. I also believe that this Bill contains sufficient safeguards to ensure that the community has a role in determining the most equitable approach for the community.

I know that both of you have been supportive of the fire service in Colorado so I hope that you will support this bill.

I will also be attending the hearing scheduled for tomorrow so will be available if I can answer any questions for you.

Thank you for your consideration.



April 18th, 2024

Representative Meg Froelich, Chair
Representative Mandy Lindsay, Vice Chair
Committee Members
House Transportation, Housing and
Local Government Committee
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Representatives,

From one set of elected officials to another, we write to show our support for SB24-194, Special District Emergency Services Funding, introduced by Representatives Barbara McLachlan and Ryan Armagost

Fire Districts like ours work hard to provide the services our community needs today, and plan for the services our District will need in the future. In recent years, long term financial planning has become increasingly difficult as the effort for statewide solutions to property tax funding continually changes local revenues and financial outlooks. Our fire board is responsible for ensuring the District remains financially sound, while ensuring there are engines, facilities, equipment and well trained firefighters in place to meet our commitments in the future.

As we work through strategic planning efforts and long-term budget forecasts and compare that to the growth we see in our community, it becomes increasingly clear that fire districts need additional tools that allow visitors and development to contribute to the financial stability and the operations of fire departments, especially in our rural areas. SB24-194 provides some of those tools, including allowing Fire Districts to go to the voters to approve a sales tax, removes the requirement for counties and municipalities to approve fire impact fees, and allows fire districts to bill for non-suppression services when they are requested of us.

We hope you will consider supporting SB24-194 and provide some options for fire districts to diversify revenue and give property owners some relief as our community and visitorship grows.

Sincerely,

Alina Bell
Board Chair
Grand Fire Protection District No.1