

I am the Assistant Town Manager for the Town of Frederick and also sit as the Deputy Executive Director for the Frederick Urban Renewal Authority. Thank you to the members of the House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee for your time and consideration of this measure:

- This bill attacks urban renewal in Colorado. Urban renewal is a common, proven and sensible tool that communities use to tackle barriers to development by publicly financing much-needed infrastructure and roadways.
- This bill seeks to rescind a subsection of the state's urban renewal law that allows agricultural land to be part of an urban renewal plan if the land was part of an urban renewal authority before 2010.
- The bill is counterproductive to efforts to enable much-needed housing and other development in Colorado, and will stifle economic development in urban, rural and suburban communities statewide. About 65 Colorado communities use urban renewal to address their unique issues, including suburban and rural communities such as Craig, Dacono, Delta, Firestone, Frederick, Fort Lupton, Lamar, La Junta, and Sterling.
- The bill sets a dangerous precedent that will harm local communities. If local elected officials take issue with including a specific project in an urban renewal plan, they should vote against it at the local level. If passed, this change will embolden local leaders to stop local projects by amending state statute to suit their needs.
- This statewide bill appears to be special legislation designed to derail a proposed development in Loveland (Centerra South), without regard to the statewide unintended consequences. This bill is moving quickly without adequate analysis, and without comment by those most affected.
- This bill, as drafted also creates conflict with other pieces of legislation working through the State (like SB23-213). For example, that bill includes language that discourages or prohibits local processes that make development "physically challenging or practically difficult". Removing urban renewal as a financing tool will have the adverse impact of making development much more expensive. Especially when dealing with blighting factors like oil and gas operations, water, waste water & storm water costs and infrastructure, and topography. This will make it much harder to achieve the types of development the State is actually trying to encourage.

We urge a "no" vote on SB23-273. Thank you for the time and consideration and for all of your efforts.

House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources
04/24/2023 Upon Adjournment
SB23-273 Agricultural Land In Urban Renewal Areas
Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Julian Jacquin Against themselves	<p>The bill aims to stop cities, municipalities, and real estate developers from adding former agricultural land to a new urban renewal plan, even if the land was included in a previous one. This is done through rescinding a subsection of the state’s urban renewal plan, if it was part of the authority before 2010.</p> <p>SB 23-273 is bad policy and sets a dangerous precedent for the state getting involved in local housing projects. SB 23-273 is set to derail a specific development in Loveland but will have unintended, statewide consequences.</p> <p>Opposed on behalf of Downtown Colorado Inc. (DCI), the Economic Development Council of Colorado (EDCC), the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), NAIOP.</p>

From the desk of Gary Lindquist

833 W. 10TH STREET LOVELAND, COLORADO 80537

April 24, 2023

Colorado Legislature
Denver, Colorado

Dear Honorable Ag Committee Members,

I am writing this panel to urge you to approve SB 23-273. Speedy passage of this bill will define a portion of HB 10-1107 that is treated as a loophole in Loveland. Opponents of this measure are working tirelessly to grant a URA designation for Centerra South. Proponents are hoping to head off the most egregious abuse of the URA statutes to date.

The U.R.A. statutes were never intended to fund developers expanding the boundaries of cities at taxpayer expense. In fact, Loveland's abuse of U.R.A. powers inspired HB-10-1107. In 2001, Loveland City Council approved the annexation 3 miles beyond its then city limits in order to implement the Tax Increment Financing aspect of a URA.

McWhinney's Centerra parcel is not a must develop or a must be rescued from blight situation. The general public will receive little benefit for sacrificing tax revenue for 25 years nor will the Thompson School District. By the way, statutes don't require a grant 25 years in duration. However, Loveland City Council members haven't even considered anything less. You must all be aware by now that the State of Colorado backfill doesn't cover all the lost tax revenue. There shouldn't be scrimping on expenses necessary because one area isn't providing its fair share.

McWhinney has built an empire in Eastern Loveland using government subsidies as the primary source of funding. Promises that there will be a windfall of taxes received once the Master Finance Agreement is fulfilled have yet to materialize. Judging by the vacancy rates in the adjacent established shopping area, achievement of that goal is doubtful.

Most business investment elsewhere relies on profit from property sales, lease payments and Metro District fees to cover the development costs. The first billion earned by McWhinney was largely due to generous subsidies. The second billion should be earned while flying solo, as did most of its competitors. Investment in building development will be avoided in an area that one firm is government subsidized unless subsidies are offered to all competitors. That's a road no local government should ever go down. Colorado taxpayers should never be the involuntary investors for schemes such as this.

Sincerely,

Gary Lindquist

I am Mary Koltze from Loveland and I am a member of Together Colorado which is a non-partisan, multi-faith based organization working to place human dignity at the center of public life through social justice action and legislative change.

I support bipartisan bill SB-23-273 because it closes a loophole that has existed since House Bill 1107 passed in 2010. The intent of bill 1107 was to prevent the exploitation of farmland being described as blight to obtain urban renewal monies for commercial development. The original intent of Urban Renewal monies was for the cleanup and improvement of blighted areas in towns and cities. The definition of blight is specific: as a menace to society or an immediate threat to public safety. Trying to apply it to undeveloped farmland does not fall within the original definition or intent of bill HB10-1107.

The moneys expended in a 25 year URA takes tax money away from the State of Colorado, Colorado cities, counties and school districts' own financial requirements that they must meet. My concern is for the taxpayers of CO and the best use of tax revenue.

Closing this loophole will benefit all of CO taxpayers and the State itself. I ask you to support this bill that closes the loophole of categorizing farmland as "blight."