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PRESS RELEASE

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WELD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELP DEFEAT BILL THAT THREATENED PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

WELD COUNTY, CO – Late yesterday afternoon, Weld County Commissioners learned that Senate Bill 14-093 was tabled until the end of the session, effectively killing a bill that sought to take private property rights away from Coloradans.

The bill, introduced in the State Senate by Cheri Jahn (D, District 20), Scott Renfroe (R, District 13) Mary Hodge (D, District 25) and Lois Tochtrop (D, District 24), would have given the power of eminent domain to companies that operate “pipelines that convey oil, gasoline, or other petroleum or hydrocarbon products.”

“This is great news for our farmers and ranchers,” said Commissioner Chairman Douglas Rademacher. “It is great news for any private property owner in Colorado.”

Under current Colorado Revised Statutes, the power of eminent domain is granted to companies for utilities such as electric and gas. SB 14-093 was designed to give that same power to private for-profit companies for construction and use of pipelines.

“We challenged the constitutionality of this bill from the beginning,” said Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer, who testified against the bill in front of both the House and Senate Committees on behalf of the Board as well as Colorado Counties Inc. “The government, including the General Assembly, does not have the authority to give public right-of-way to a private company nor should they take private property and give it to private companies.”

In addition to Commissioner Kirkmeyer’s testimony at the state capitol in opposition to the bill, the entire Board of Commissioners has spoken against the bill numerous times during their public meetings.

“We see land-use cases come up frequently where a company wants to build a pipeline and needs to acquire the land rights to do it,” said Commissioner Freeman. “We always encourage the company to work with the landowner, because it is a private property issue.”

“This has been a long battle,” said Commissioner Kirkmeyer. “We appreciate those representatives from Weld County who helped support the effort to preserve private property rights.”

Senators Greg Brophy (R, District 1) and Vicki Marble (R, District 23) voted against the bill in the Senate, while Representatives Stephen Humphrey (R, District 48), Perry Buck (R, District 49), Dave Young (D, District 50) and Lori Saine (R, District 63) opposed the bill in the House.

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