



Danny L. Tomlinson

303-638-6509 • dtomlinson@msn.com

Ed Bowditch

303-489-8680 • edbowditch@aol.com

Jennifer M. Cassell

785-393-0472 • jennifer.cassell@gmail.com

George Dibble

303-601-1619 • georgedibble@mindspring.com

Colorado General Assembly 2015 Legislative Session Overview

We have been pleased to prepare this end-of-session review of the just-completed legislative session for more than 20 years. The review is meant to provide the reader with a 30,000-foot view of the session, with links to backup documents and resources that will allow the reader to delve into more detail on those items of interest. We hope that you will enjoy reading our review and encourage you to share it with family, friends, business colleagues and others whom you think might be interested.

This review of the 2015 session of the Colorado General Assembly has been prepared by Danny L. Tomlinson, Ed Bowditch, Jennifer Cassell, and George Dibble, and represents their views only. Sources include the Office of Legislative Legal Services, Office of Legislative Council, Office of State Planning & Budgeting, Joint Budget Committee, and others. We appreciate the resources available in the preparation of this review. This review may be reproduced/distributed with appropriate attribution.

Thanks and enjoy!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	2015 Summary	Page 3
II.	Budget Overview	Page 4
	A. Colorado's Economy and Tax Revenue	Page 4
	B. FY 2015-16 Budget	Page 4
III.	Legislative Issue Overview	
	A. Agriculture	Page 6
	B. Corrections and Public Safety	Page 7
	C. Economic Development	Page 7
	D. Education	Page 8
	E. Environment and Energy	Page 9
	F. Health Care and Human Services	Page 9
	G. Insurance	Page 10
	H. Local Government	Page 10
	I. Marijuana	Page 11
	J. PERA	Page 11
	K. State Affairs	Page 12
	L. Transportation	Page 12
IV.	Summer/Fall 2015	Page 12
V.	Looking Forward to 2016	Page 12

I. 2015 SUMMARY

Following the elections of November 2014, the Republicans regained control of the state Senate by a margin of 18-17. The Democrats were able to maintain control in the House, albeit by a smaller majority (34-31) than during the 2013 and 2014 legislative sessions. As well, Democrat Governor John Hickenlooper was re-elected. With split control of the chambers, we expected partisan legislation to be less successful; in fact, that was the case in 2015. The last time we saw split control of the chambers was in 2011 and 2012 when the Republicans controlled the House and the Democrats held the Senate majority.

In 2015 a total of 682 bills were introduced; 367 passed (54%) and were sent to the Governor. The Governor vetoed three bills, and three were allowed to become law without the Governor's signature. The passage of any bill required bi-partisan support, and that was the case with each of the bills sent to the Governor. In years when the same party controlled both chambers, we saw much higher success rates – 68% in 2013 and 72% in 2014, as an example.

The good news – revenues are up, the economy continues to grow, and many of the reductions in General Fund appropriations that we saw beginning in 2008 have been or will be restored. The bad news – demands are up (caseload, enrollment, infrastructure) and the interaction of Gallagher, TABOR and Amendment 23 creates a Gordian knot that the General Assembly will find increasingly more difficult to manage in coming years.

The General Assembly dealt with numerous highly partisan and/or contentious bills this year. These bills included: red-light cameras; rain barrel water capture; abortion or personhood; felony DUI; guns (repeal or amendment of legislation passed in 2013); TABOR refunds; K-12 testing and assessments and of course, the state budget. It is worth noting that the six-member Joint Budget Committee (the “powerful JBC”) had three Republicans and three Democrats and that four of the members had no previous experience on the JBC. In spite of the even party line split and the relative lack of experience, the committee was able to masterfully craft a state budget that met with overwhelming support from their colleagues.

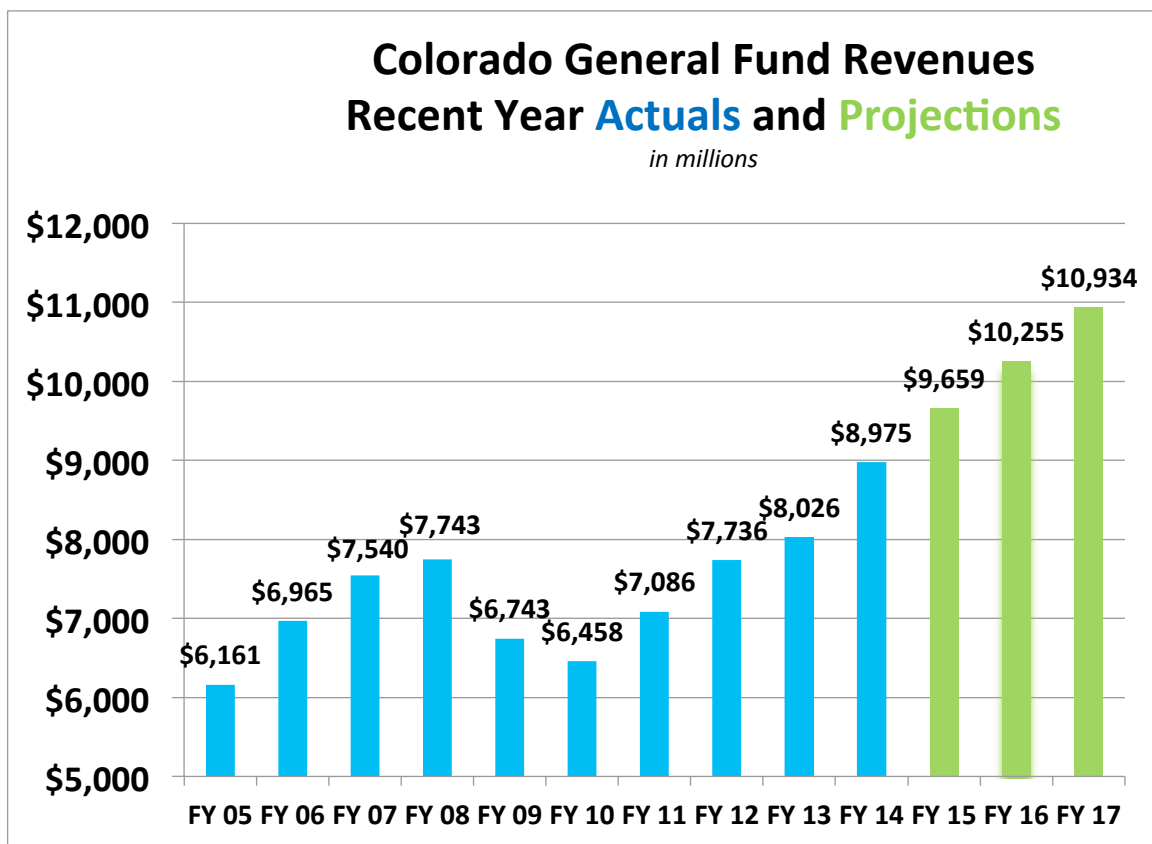
It's also worth noting that a number of the high-profile (read: controversial, expensive, high-impact, etc.) bills were introduced in the final few days of the legislative session: HB 15-1344, to fund the NWSS expansion; HB 15-1348, re-write of urban renewal/tax increment financing statutes; HB 15-1389, making the Hospital Provider Fee a TABOR enterprise; SB 15-272, TRANS II bill to fund highway construction and maintenance; HB 15-1388 PERA; and SB 15-284, the “anti-Gaylord” bill dealing with financial and tax incentives for development projects. Each of these bills was introduced in the last month of the session and most in the final ten days of the session.

II. BUDGET OVERVIEW

A. COLORADO'S ECONOMY AND TAX REVENUE

Colorado's economy continues to be among the best in the nation. Strong job growth in the Denver metro area and northern Front Range, coupled with tourism and agriculture, has helped Colorado rebound from the 2008 recession. Still, the recovery is uneven and parts of the state (much of Western Colorado, Colorado Springs and Pueblo) have not experienced the same degree of economic recovery.

On the strength of income and sales taxes, Colorado's tax revenues (General Fund) continue to accrue. The chart below shows the General Fund revenues for the last few years and projected (by Legislative Council) for the next few years.



The next quarterly revenue estimate will be issued on June 19, 2015.

B. FY 2015-16 BUDGET

In developing the budget for FY 2015-16, the General Assembly had approximately \$660 million new General Fund revenues. Despite that seemingly large figure, the state's budget was limited by a

number of factors. Most of the new funding was required to address inflationary and enrollment increases in education and caseload increases in Medicaid. Outside of those commitments, the FY 2015-16 budget reflects the following priorities:

1. Higher Education. For the second year in a row, the state made a major commitment to higher education funding – about \$90 million, or a 12 percent increase in state funding. This additional support brings higher education close to its prerecession (2008-11) level of funding.
2. Corrections. The Department received an increase to reflect the costs of housing offenders in jails, private prisons, and halfway houses. The General Assembly also moved some lease purchase appropriations from the capital budget to the operating budget – and this shows up as an increase in the State’s operating budget.
3. Services for Seniors. For the second year in a row, the legislature recognized the needs of senior citizens – appropriating an increase of \$4 million, which is allocated to the state’s 20 Area Agencies on Aging to provide support for homebound seniors.
4. Economic Development Programs. The JBC allocated an increase of \$3 million for film production and \$4 million for tourism promotion within the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. In addition, the JBC extended funding for the Colorado Credit Reserve program, which helps small businesses gain access to capital for equipment purchases, infrastructure purchases, and expansion projects.
5. K-12 Education. Beyond the inflationary increases in K-12 education, the legislature authorized one-time funding of \$10 million for small, rural schools, and \$5 million for at-risk students. Finally, the General Assembly provided additional funding to “buy down” the negative factor by \$25 million. The negative factor is currently more than \$850 million.

Further, the legislature set aside funding for a TABOR refund of \$70 million. This will be refunded when people file their 2015 income tax returns in early 2016.

In addition to the annual budgetary changes, one can ask a series of policy questions about the state budget.

1. **Medicaid**. How much can the Medicaid caseload continue to grow? For the first ten months of FY 2014-15, the state’s *Medicaid enrollment expanded by over 150,000 clients*. There are now more than 1.2 million Coloradans on Medicaid. Despite the enhanced federal match, our Medicaid program consumes an increasing share of the state’s budget.
2. **TABOR**. The state has reached its TABOR cap – the revenue cap imposed by the Taxpayers Bill of Rights. It is estimated that we will be about \$70 million over in FY 2014-15, and this amount will be refunded, per constitutional mandate, in FY 2015-16. However, the TABOR refund is projected to dramatically increase in the next few years. This will further constrict state budgetary options.
3. **K-12 Negative Factor**. The K-12 budget continues to increase. But the negative factor – the amount below our funding target required by the provisions of Amendment 23 - remains at approximately \$855 million. The state has been “carrying” a K-12 negative factor since FY 2009-10, and it has hovered between \$800 million and \$1.0 billion most of that time. At this point, it is fair to ask whether the negative factor will ever be eliminated.

Outside of the Capitol, a group of citizens is suing the State claiming the negative factor is a violation of the constitutional provisions of Amendment 23. The Supreme Court heard arguments on the case earlier this month.

4. **Transportation.** The State’s transportation infrastructure continues to deteriorate, and, outside of borrowing funding (SB 15-272), there is no plan to address this deterioration in a significant way. Slightly more than \$100 million will be transferred to the Highway Users Trust Fund, in accordance with SB 09-228.

These questions relate to what many people believe is a “*fiscal train wreck*” for FY 2016-17. Presently, some economists forecast that after holding the K-12 negative factor constant, the state will have a total of \$100 million for all other areas of state government. It is fair to say that this budget forecast would lead to reductions in government programs – at the same time the state will be forced to provide TABOR tax refunds.

In part to address this future fiscal issue, the Governor recommended that the **Hospital Provider Fee** be designated as a TABOR Enterprise. Under the Governor’s proposal, the revenues provided by the hospitals to the state would not have been counted as TABOR revenues. Similar to the Institutions of Higher Education, the State Lottery, and the Division of Wildlife, the Hospital Provider Fee would have been designated as an enterprise. Moving this “off budget” would create space under the state’s TABOR limit and would have lowered the TABOR refunds – and allowed the state to retain those revenues for budgeting purposes.

The Governor submitted this proposal to the General Assembly on April 16 – Day 100 of the session. This left little time for consideration. In fairness to the Governor such a TABOR enterprise proposal would likely not have been passed even if it had been submitted earlier in the session given the political landscape in the legislature.

III. LEGISLATIVE ISSUE OVERVIEW

A. AGRICULTURE

One of the major issues for agriculture is the redevelopment of the National Western Stock Show. HB 15-1344 directs the state (through Colorado State University) to partner with the City and County of Denver and the National Western Stock Show to provide much needed facilities improvements. The state will issue up to \$250 million in bonds to construct new facilities for CSU, while the City and County of Denver will propose a financing package to enhance the National Western facilities as well. This new, expanded facility is intended to increase Stock Show attendance, tourism, and agricultural research and development opportunities through CSU. It has been noted that the NWSS facility could become the “Silicon Valley of Agriculture”.

Another bill, SB 15-196, will help to create a certified hemp seed program within the Department of Agriculture to promote an emerging industry for farmers. Because hemp cannot be more than 0.3 percent THC, (otherwise it is classified as marijuana and has to be destroyed), the bill allows hemp

farmers to have their crop tested during the growing cycle in order to increase the likelihood of a successful crop.

B. CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The legislature considered a number of police reform bills this session, all aimed at “rebuilding trust”. After lengthy consideration and testimony, a number of these measures passed: HB 15-1285, a study of body cameras (to recommend best practices), HB 15-1290 to clarify an individual’s right to record police actions, and HB 15-1287 to address police training improvements.

After multiple years of attempts at passage, the legislature passed a felony DUI bill – HB 15-1043, which increases the penalty to a felony for three or more DUI or DWAI offenses. The bill passed overwhelmingly in both chambers.

On June 3, the Governor issued his first vetoes of the legislative session on photo radar and red light cameras bills. HB 15-1098 would have required the state or local government to receive voter approval before using red lights and SB 15-276 would have prohibited the use of photo radar and red light cameras. The Governor stated in his veto message that “speeding and disregard for traffic signals are a danger for all drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians...unfortunately, these bills go too far”. Instead, he is encouraging the legislature to enact legislation next session that limits photo radar and red light cameras. The Governor also vetoed HB 15-1390 which would have raised the amount of interest charged for a supervised loan or a consumer credit sale stating that “prior to approving any increase in the allowable amount of interest charged, we believe it is necessary to more fully explore and substantiate the claim that a change in the law is necessary for these products to be accessible”.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As expected in the 2015 session, we saw many business related bills. The House introduced bills dealing with equal pay (HB 15-1133), minimum wage (HB 15-1300, HCR 1001), overtime pay (HB 15-1331) and parental and family leave (HB 15-1221 and HB 15-1258) – many of the same issues we are seeing on the national level. Each of these bills failed to make it through the process.

We also saw a number of bills dealing with income tax credits, sales and use tax refunds, and tax expenditures; however, many of them struggled. Tax credits for rural broadband, data centers, student loans, energy efficiency, and recycling equipment did not pass. Another bill that did not pass was HB 15-1205, which would have created a tax expenditure evaluation committee. Business groups were conflicted on this issue; one side believed it would have created a biased and nonobjective committee to study the state’s tax incentives and the other side believed it would increase transparency and ensure effective tax expenditures.

Those tax related bills that did pass were HB 15-1180 which will allow a sales and use tax refund for investment in clean tech and medical equipment, and HB 15-1219 to allow an additional option for a taxpayer to obtain a tax credit for a renewable energy project in an enterprise zone.

This session also focused on rural economic development. Three bills were introduced – HB 15-1157 to create working groups to study economic development in distressed areas, HB 15-1177 to fund a rural economic development grant program, and SB15-036 to fund emergency economic development assistance in rural areas. Ultimately, none of the bills passed, but the JBC did appropriate \$3 million to DOLA’s Rural Economic Development Initiative program. Also passed was SB 15-282, which provides tax benefits to new, out of state businesses that locate in smaller, economically distressed counties, and provides a tax benefit if these companies hire individuals who are unemployed.

Workforce development was a top priority for the General Assembly this year. A package of bipartisan bills were introduced and passed this session: SB15-082 County Workforce Development Property Tax Incentives; HB 15-1230 Innovative Industry Workforce Development Program; HB 15-1271 Mobile Learning Labs Workforce Development; HB 15-1274 Creation of Career Pathways for Students; HB 15-1275 Career and Technical Education in Concurrent Enrollment, and HB 15-1276 Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment and Training.

D. EDUCATION

K-12 EDUCATION

The BIG issue this year was testing – or more specifically, how to reduce the wide array of tests required for students. With more than 10 testing bills introduced, it took until the last day of the session for a compromise to emerge – through HB 15-1323. The bill reduces required tests in Colorado to nearly the federal minimum, and streamlined other early childhood assessments. The issue of “overtesting” has been the top education issue in the last few sessions, and whether students, parents, and teachers will believe that HB 15-1323 answers all of their concerns is unknown.

In addition to testing reductions, HB 15-1323 also allows districts to create a local pilot, though a federal waiver is required before that could be substituted for the state tests. The bill also delays the use of testing for teacher and principal evaluations, requires districts to explain the use and purpose of assessments, and allows parents to opt-out of tests without consequences of punishment.

The other major K-12 bill adopted this year was SB 15-213 – drafted in response to the 2013 Arapahoe High School shooting. The bill creates a limited waiver of governmental immunity for school districts in cases of school violence. Proponents said this bill makes Colorado consistent with other states in terms of school liability, though many school districts believe they will be held responsible for certain actions over which they have no control.

One issue that was not resolved – and will likely be back in 2016 – is data privacy. This year the legislature was unable find the balance between district responsibilities, the need for valid student data, and the responsibility of the testing companies.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Aside from the significant budget increase, the primary higher education issue was the implementation of the outcome based budgeting model. This model, as directed by HB 14-1319,

allocates higher education funding on the basis of outcomes (degrees awarded) and state specified priorities. The Department of Higher Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education coordinated the development of the formula in Summer 2014, and the allocations in FY 2015-16 are based on that formula.

E. ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

This session, we saw bills introduced to ease the compliance of SB 13-252, Colorado's current renewable energy standards. SB 15-46 was signed by the Governor and allows REA's greater flexibility in the technologies they use to meet their standards. SB 15-254 extends the deadline for municipal utilities to receive the 3-for-1 multiplier credits for solar generation installations.

Also, the Department of Natural Resources received increased funding from HB 15-1006 to fight invasive phreatophytes that consume large volumes of water from Colorado's precious water sources. Wildfire prevention was still a topic this session. HB 15-1129 is aimed at giving homeowners days, rather than hours, for notice of imminent fire threats through use of a predictive decision support system.

The 2015 session was very quiet on oil and gas issues as many were awaiting the release of the State and Local Oil and Gas Task Force recommendations. We will likely see legislation in the 2016 session that enacts recommendations, but more importantly, opponents of the Task Force and some environmental groups have announced they will push for a ballot initiative in 2016 to ban fracking statewide.

F. HEALTH CARE AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Colorado Health Exchange has been a topic of controversy since it was enacted in 2011, and we have previously seen attempts to repeal or alter the law - this session was no different. However, two bills were adopted this year: SB 15-019 allows the State Auditor to conduct a performance audit of the Exchange and SB 15-256 creates an oversight committee for the Exchange. The Health Exchange recently adopted a budget of \$53.7 million, which includes a cash operating deficit of about \$4.6 million and a total deficit of about \$13.3 million. The deficit will be covered by the Exchange's current \$28.5 million reserve.

In the human services arena, the legislature addressed a number of important issues this year:

- SB 15-204 moves the Office of Child Protection from the Department of Human Services to the Judicial Branch, to be overseen by an independent nonpartisan board. This move comes after years of concern about the investigation of child abuse cases.
- The legislature increased funding for senior services ([Older Coloradans Act](#)) by \$4.0 million in the Long Bill. These funds will provide meals, in-home services, counseling and non-emergency medical transport for seniors and will help those seniors remain in their homes.
- HB 15-1033 creates a task force to develop a Strategic Plan on Aging. This bipartisan measure will address the economic, workforce, and social effects of Colorado's aging population.

- HB 15-1233 creates a task force to examine respite care services in Colorado. The task force will look at ways to increase respite caregivers and expand access to respite care.
- HB 15-1318 creates a framework for consolidating Medicaid waivers in the developmental disabilities area, and authorizes HCPF to develop a plan for addressing potential “conflicts of interest” in the current system.

After the session 86 legislators signed a letter to the Governor expressing concerns about the Executive Director of the Department of Human Services. After the letter was submitted, some legislators backed off of their criticisms – while the Governor expressed support for the Executive Director. This letter appears to be a result of long-standing issues of child protection, as well as recent allegations of abuse at the Pueblo Regional Center.

G. INSURANCE

The most significant insurance issue for the 2015 session was the big debate on **construction defects**. Prior to the legislative session, construction defects reform was the highest priority for homebuilders, contractors, economic development organizations, and Denver metro-area mayors and city councils. SB 15-177 was introduced in mid-February and would have required construction defect claims to be mediated or arbitrated; required a majority of homeowners, rather than a majority of HOA members, to approve the filing of a construction defect claim; and required an HOA to disclose the advantages and disadvantages of filing a construction defect claim. Ultimately, SB15-177 passed the Senate but after failed negotiation attempts with the House, and significant opposition from the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association, it was killed in the House. We also saw SB 15-91, which would have reduced the maximum statutory limitation period from 8 years to 4 years, die in the House.

In response to the failed construction defects bills, the House introduced HB 15-1385 which would have created a voluntary review and validation of the quality of construction of new multi-family attached housing units. The sponsor laid the bill over till after session, effectively killing it.

H. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Changing the Urban Renewal/Tax Increment Financing statutes has been an issue for the past few sessions. After last year’s veto by the Governor of HB 14-1375, the Colorado Municipal League introduced SB 15-135 to give counties a “seat at the table” in the urban renewal planning process. The bill was stalled in the Senate until mid-April, but then passed the Senate on a vote of 30-5. After trying to work with Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI), the Special District Association (SDA), and others on compromise amendments to SB 15-135, the bill was killed in the House.

In response, CCI introduced HB 15-1348, which was a close replica of HB 14-1375. The Senate Finance Committee significantly amended the bill on Day 118 of the legislative session to give stakeholders representation on urban renewal authority boards, require stakeholders to identify service impacts and costs, and create a process to resolve disagreements. The bill eventually passed on the final day of session. CML and many municipalities requested the Governor veto HB15-1348 due to many ambiguities in the bill; ultimately, the Governor signed the legislation into law on May

29. Several municipalities have indicated that urban renewal projects that are either planned or have just started are now “at risk”.

Among rising concerns in the Front Range for little availability for affordable and attainable housing, House and Senate Democrats introduced three bills to try to help: HB 15-1383 to continue the low income housing tax credit, HB 15-1384 to create an affordable housing assistance fund, and SB 15-79 to assess a document recording fee from a county to place in an affordable housing fund – these efforts failed.

I. MARIJUANA

Marijuana was another much-discussed topic this legislative session.

- HB 15-1283 creates a ‘reference library’ within CDPHE to develop and maintain a marijuana laboratory testing reference library that contains methodologies for marijuana testing in the areas of potency, homogeneity, contaminants, and solvents.
- HB 15-1379 allows out-of-state residents to apply for a medical or retail marijuana license to operate a business.
- HB 15-1379 prohibits transferring inventory from a medical marijuana business to a retail marijuana business.
- SB 15-115 extends the medical marijuana code.
- SB 15-260 creates a medical marijuana testing facility license and requires that medical marijuana be tested.

The most significant bill was HB 15-1367, which refers a ballot issue to voters asking whether the state may retain and spend revenue collected from the Proposition AA excise and special sales taxes on retail marijuana. This totals nearly \$60 million a year. The referendum will appear on the ballot this November as Proposition BB.

J. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (PERA)

It is difficult to pass any PERA legislation unless there is broad bipartisan support for change. Late in the 2015 session, this almost happened. HB 15-1388, with the support of PERA, the Governor, and the State Treasurer, and (initially) bipartisan sponsors in both houses, would have allowed the State to issue bonds (up to \$6 billion) and give the proceeds to PERA. PERA would then invest the proceeds, and hope to earn more than the interest rates on the bonds. The State would use the currently scheduled employer contribution payments (“AED” and “SAED”) to repay the bonds. This bill was introduced on April 28, and passed the House 45-19. However, as the bill was quickly moving through the process, a number of people expressed concern about the danger of arbitrage, the “bailing out” of PERA, and the speed at which the bill was moving through the process. These concerns led to the bill dying quickly once it was introduced in the Senate. If interest rates remain low over the summer, the concept could be back next year.

K. STATE AFFAIRS

One of the most contentious bills this session was SB 15-275, which would have allowed the General Assembly access to proprietary and confidential information from state agencies. The bill was introduced as a result of a state employee being punished for sharing confidential information with certain state legislators in an effort to disclose alleged malfeasance conducted by a state agency. The bill was opposed by over 50 business organizations, several state agencies, and the Attorney General, and was ultimately killed.

For the first time in years, the General Assembly voted to give themselves a raise, though it will not be effective until 2019. SB 15-288 aligns the salaries paid to state legislators and the executive offices with judicial branch officials – an increase from anywhere between 16 and 40 percent. Salaries for legislators would increase from \$30,000 to \$41,828, and for the Governor from \$90,000 to \$128,049. Other elected officials will see raises as well.

There was also a push to hold presidential primary election elections rather than caucuses in Colorado, but this bill (SB 15-287) failed.

L. TRANSPORTATION

One major piece of transportation financing, SB 15-272, known as TRANs II, would have allowed the state to borrow money up to \$3.5 billion for specific transportation projects by issuing anticipation notes (bonds). The bill ran into opposition from CDOT, the I-70 coalition, Colorado Competitive Council, Association of General Contractors, and others. According to the opponents, it would hinder the ability to fund new transportation plans, take funds out of maintenance projects, and circumvent the State Transportation Improvement Program. With all the opposition, the bill was killed in the House.

Similar to the 2014 session, SB 15-172 was introduced because of continued concerns raised about public participation and “transparency” of the public-private partnership (PPP), and SB 15-018 was introduced to limit the FASTER late fees of registering your vehicle. Both of these bills did not pass.

IV. **SUMMER/FALL 2015**

During the summer and fall of 2015, several statutory and interim committees will meet to study transportation; water; early childhood and school readiness; police and firefighter pension reform; vocational rehab services for the blind; profiling-initiated contacts by law enforcement officers; school safety and youth in crisis; off-highway vehicles; and the Colorado health insurance exchange oversight.

V. **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016**

A number of important issues were not resolved in the recent session and will assuredly be addressed next year. These include but aren't limited to: budget/TABOR; transportation funding; use of red light cameras; K-12 and the “negative factor”; construction defects and affordable

housing; a Colorado presidential primary; birth control; adequate and appropriate tread depth on automobile tires in the high country during snow storms; PERA; and the initiative process. With split control of the chambers and 2016 being an election year, the 2016 legislative session will be extremely busy.

Also, all 65 seats in the State House of Representatives and 18 of the State Senate seats will be up for election/re-election. Of those legislative seats, eight Senators and nine Representatives will be term-limited out of office. In even-numbered years we nearly always expect a number of bills introduced “because this is my last chance”, or “let’s get the opposition on the record on this issue” or just plain “why not”?

The 2016 Colorado election cycle will receive a lot of attention. U.S. Senator Michael Bennet is up for re-election. After the successful campaign of Republican Congressman Cory Gardner to unseat Democratic Senator Mark Udall in 2014, Republicans are eyeing the 2016 race as an opportunity to have both Colorado senator seats. However, Republicans have yet to announce a formidable candidate for the race. Congressman Mike Coffman recently declared that he would not be a candidate for U.S. Senate, but rather would continue in the House of Representatives. His wife, Attorney General Cynthia Coffman will be mid-term and has been mentioned as a potential candidate to run against Senator Bennet. If 2016 becomes a Republican year, then the seat could be a toss-up. Each of the state’s seven Congressional district seats will be up for election/re-election.

The state-wide offices – Governor/Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Treasurer and Secretary of State – will be mid-term and not up for election/re-election until 2018.

Colorado will once again be a battleground state for the presidential election. With Colorado still a purple state – turning blue for President Obama in 2008 and 2012, and turning red for Senator Gardner in 2014 – we will see candidates fundraising, organizing and campaigning heavily in Colorado.

We hope that you will find the information in this annual end-of-session review to be useful, interesting and helpful. We encourage you to share it with others that you think might enjoy reading it. We would ask that you give appropriate attribution if you do share.

Thanks and have a safe and fun summer.

Danny, Ed, Jenn and George