

With a late start to the General Assembly this year, always the second Wednesday of January, it started out feeling a little unusual. Opening day remarks seemed to draw a line in the sand and did not give me much hope that meaningful legislation would be rare and political posturing would probably set the tone. I have never had a bad year and do not expect one this year. You have successes and failures and the key is not to concentrate on either.

A disappointing loss was having the State of Colorado not stand up and support those with claims with the EPA over the Gold King Mine spill. It is very difficult to sue the Federal Government and this legislation could assist in that process. I was very disappointed the bill was assigned to State Affairs Committee, State Affairs is referred to as the kill committee. This is the prerogative of the Speaker to assign bills to any committee. I felt that this bill because of its effect on the Animas River deserved to be heard in Health and Environment or Judiciary. I did not ask anyone to travel to from Durango to testify, because I knew that by the committee assignment it was destined to die. I was told that they had without knowledge set up a remote testimony site at Fort Lewis. With that I requested that the bill be laid over to give the citizens of La Plata County an opportunity to explain their dilemma without having to spend the two days and \$500.00 incurred by traveling to Denver. That request was denied and the bill was killed. If something of this magnitude had happened in the Metro area it would have been given more attention. I just learned today that an irrigation company can no longer by liability insurance because of the spill. We lost the bill, but will continue to fight to hold EPA accountable to those damaged by their error.

Several bills are starting to make their way through the House and more will be coming from the Senate soon. HB 1097 regarding PUC Permit for Medicaid Providers has cleared committee and waiting House approval. This bill will provide non-emergency transportation for Medicaid patients and will save tax payer dollars. HB 1141 will provide education for home owners about the dangers of radon gas. HB 1169 will establish voting rights for the Ute Mountain Tribe and the Southern Ute Tribe on the Transportation Advisory Committee. They would on this committee, but did not have a vote. HJR 1002 concerns the inability of some water users to do repair work on reservoirs and structures on land managed by the Federal Government. These projects have been held up by failure of Feds to issue permits in a timely manner.

Soon to be scheduled will be HB 1111 concerning a referred measure to place on the ballot the requirement of a photo ID to register and vote in the last 29 days prior to an election. HB 1255 deals with forest management to improve water quality. Several other bills are awaiting committee assignment and I will give an update as they move forward.

I am one again serving as Ranking Republican House Ag and Natural Resources and Transportation and Energy Committee's. I you have concerns on any legislation please email or contact my office.

Representative Don Coram