



Please Vote YES on HB23-1194

Closed Landfills Remediation Local Governments Grants

Sponsors: Reps. McLachlan & Pugliese, Sens. Simpson & Ginal

Issue

The conditions of closed landfills in Colorado are an ever-evolving situation due to evolving science around pollutants, changing water tables, and human activities like development. On occasion, these factors necessitate remediation of a closed landfill, many of which are owned by local governments. However, because local governments are the fiscal agents of their jurisdictions and must ensure the delivery of critical services such as public safety, human services, road maintenance, etc., while facing revenue generation restraints imposed by TABOR, **local governments need state support to be able to address and remediate closed landfills effectively.**

Protecting residents and the environment is of the utmost importance, but local governments cannot take this on alone. Statewide funding to address the collective duty of counties and the state to public health and the environment is critical to our shared goal of remediating any issues resulting from closed landfills.

Solution

Create a grant program to provide a sustainable funding stream for environmental remediation of closed, local-government-owned landfills, prioritizing funding for applications that directly remediate the greatest actual risk to public health and environment.

Background

There are close to 200 closed landfills in Colorado. Most of these closed landfills collected solid waste before laws and regulations required landfills be environmentally engineered, and several closed to meet the 1994 deadline set by the EPA after which landfills needed to comply with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) regulations. These landfills were closed in compliance with the laws and regulations that were in place at the time of their closure. However, **evolving circumstances sometimes necessitate remediation of closed landfills, which can cost multiple millions of dollars.**¹ When such landfills are owned by local governments, local governments may face significant trade-offs in either paying the costs of remediation or funding other critical services. Statewide funding to provide resources for local governments to mitigate risks to public health and the environment is critical.

Additionally, there are about 20 landfills that are expected to close in the coming years. As the number of closed landfills in the state increases (while the often-unpredictable factors contributing to the need for closed landfill remediation remain), the need for state support for remediation of closed landfills will prevail.

Please Support HB23-1194

¹ Some estimates from counties who have remediated their closed landfills range from \$1.75 million to more than \$20 million.

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