

Open letter to the Weld County Dems News

Campaigning under the current circumstances is a true challenge with a remarkable learning curve for the candidates, public servants and our constituents. Instead of talking face-to-face – a myriad of virtual meetings, emails, text messages and conference-calls are pouring our way from every direction. Our schedules are packed and our systems are stressed: internet service seems unreliable in moments, some of our working families can no longer afford to pay for basic living expenses, not to mention expensive services such as internet. This week we saw the number of our unemployed reach 30 million nationally, and some hopeful news for the state legislature on distribution of Federal support to the states. While we are keeping our fingers crossed, CO legislators are facing a serious \$3 billion dollar deficit, and there are immediate measures that our legislators are preparing to take to balance our budget by the end of the fiscal year in June. Here's a few of these measures and an initiative I support, alongside the report from the Governor's office that I have shared with our constituents in SD-23 over a Zoom call:

Economic Recovery Strategies

1. Legislators will be working to receive support from the Federal Government equivalent to Obama's *ARRA* (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (111th Congress' stimulus package))
2. CO has a State Emergency Fund of approximately 700-800 million of which 68 million is already reserved to medical care under COVID conditions
3. Dems in Legislature will propose a state hold on 3% salary raises for State employees
4. Initiative 271 should be passed to allow graduated tax implementation on the top 1%- income earners of 250K+ salary earners to bring in roughly 2 billion into state revenue
5. Freeze Administrative salaries of 100K+ at the universities



To: Executive Directors, Colorado State Departments and Agencies
From: Lauren Larson, Director, Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting
CC: Budget Directors, Colorado State Agencies and Departments
Date: March 30, 2020
Re: Guidance for Fiscal Conservation (FY20 year end)

Purpose: To provide guidance to Departments and Agencies regarding fiscal conservation to reduce the use of state resources for non-emergency purposes. Given the economic uncertainty and forecasted revenue decline, the State must prepare for a possible prolonged period of economic disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic circumstances. NOTE: THIS GUIDANCE DOES NOT APPLY TO FUNDS BEING SPENT ON THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19.

Departments and agencies should use available statutory and administrative flexibility to prioritize existing resources to COVID-19 response and, when allowed by law, to avoid obligating state resources to purposes for which there is not an immediate need. Based on the revenue shortfall experienced during previous economic disruptions, the State needs to prioritize funding that supports the immediate public health response, essential economic supports, and core government services. This may mean delaying, deferring, or canceling other obligations.

Guidance:

OSPB is requiring that all Departments and agencies meet or exceed the attached General Fund reversion targets (in \$) for the current fiscal year. Delaying, deferring, or canceling non-essential obligations will enable the State to increase reversions and repurpose these funds in the next fiscal year.

- See attached for reversion targets for each Department. The targets are set based on prior years' reversion history plus 5%.
- Notify your OSPB analyst by April 15 if your Department will not be able to meet or exceed the reversion target.
- Reductions must not:
 - impact emergency spending
 - limit ability to meet your WIGs
 - reduce customer service for public-facing technology and processes

One of my legislative proposals to help offset the economic crisis we are experiencing right now, is modeled on FDR's memorable policy of "putting people to work" and is based on a vision to create holistic approach to solve our many problems: offer an opportunity for displaced workers (including Oil and Gas laid-off workers) to have a state supported employment, unclog our infrastructure and bring in millions of dollars to improve our roads. This legislative idea is based on expanding RTD axing district to include our wealthiest Douglas county so that we can build a light rail connecting our most populated municipalities with alternative transit means. Here's a snippet of this proposal alongside an editorial by an esteemed colleague, Professor Sven Steinmo (Political science, CU Boulder) and his co-author Mark Blyth:

Put people to work proposal



SENATE BILL 21-001

BY SENATOR(S) Nicoll
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) _____.

CONCERNING EXPANDING THE BOUNDARY OF THE RTD TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT TO INCLUDE ALL OF DOUGLAS COUNTY

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Article 9 of title 32, CRS, is amended by the ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING NEW SECTIONS to read:

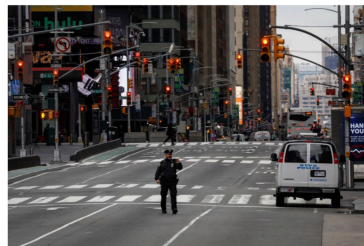
32-9-106.2 Additional district area – Douglas county. (1) UPON THE SIGNATURE OF THE GOVERNOR, IN ADDITION TO ANY EXISTING AREAS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN THE RTD DISTRICT, THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE DISTRICT.

(2) ANY ADDITIONAL MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN SALES TAX REVENUE SHALL FIRST BE APPLIED TO FINISH THE US-36 FASTRAK RAIL LINE.

Can a Pandemic Defeat the Politics of Austerity?

The Key to Economic Recovery After COVID-19

By Sven Steinmo and Mark Blyth April 22, 2020



An NYPD officer in Times Square, New York City, March 2020

After years of preaching to the world about the dangers of government spending, the U.S. government has suddenly gone Keynesian. [Checks to households](#), massive liquidity injections from the U.S. [Federal Reserve](#), and [bailouts for businesses](#) are now the order of the day—all at hitherto impossible levels, all justified by the extraordinary threat of the pandemic crisis.

The U.S. government does not usually spend liberally. Rather, it tends to

Another disturbing piece of news that surfaced this week by way of a petition letter, came out of my very own University of Colorado, Boulder, where an esteemed colleague, and accomplished professor and researcher, Dr. Devlet Hemlig, who has dedicated decades of research to the study of CO's air pollution pointing out the obvious culprits – Oil and Gas industry – whose operations have been polluting our air at a catastrophic scale, on one occasion upon an explosion of abandoned pipelines under a residential house in Firestone, spewing out benzene that travelled to the front range within a week. Dr Chandra Rosenthal, Rocky Mountain Field Office Director Of the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) wrote the following address:

“Dr. Helmig was abruptly fired, after 25 years of work, when the state of Colorado began relying on his unimpeachable research to set up air pollution guidelines. Accurate science gives the State the ability to slow oil and gas production and threatens a very powerful industry. This letter, to the University of Colorado, asks them to respond to the scientific community with answers on how his important air research will continue. The letter also asks for the University to respond to Dr. Helmig's requests for more information on his dismissal.” (email petition, www.peer.org)

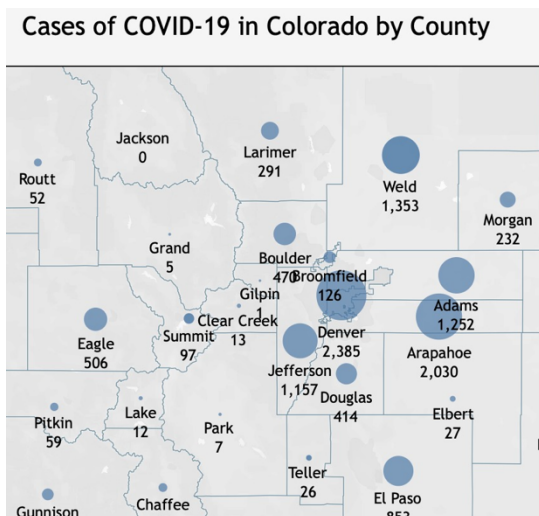
I personally have signed my name onto this petition and encouraged my university colleagues to do the same. If we do not stand up for those members of our community who put their careers on the line and do the right thing of researching the impacts of industries on our environment and supporting our legislators with science to help them make science-based decisions, we are certainly doomed.

Galina Nicoll, Ph.D.

On another local note, on Friday night (April 24) I attended and provided public comments at Broomfield City Council's virtual town hall meeting, where Councilors voted 8-2 to keep stringent safe-distancing measures in place and extend Broomfield's 'stay-at-home' protection order (consistent with other Metro-area counties like Denver, Jefferson, Boulder, Adams, and Arapahoe). While relaxing safety measures slightly for business activity, Governor Polis' new "safer-at-home" protocol should still be followed until May 8 to reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection and transmission. LIKE YOU, I am anxious to get outside and return to my normal daily routine! However, being careless and opening all businesses prematurely risks a return of the virus that could potentially expose or kill thousands more Coloradans from infection.

That's why it is so disheartening – if not dangerous - to learn of the Weld County

Republican Commissioners vote to defy the Governor's protective order to stay safely inside until at least May 8, like the other Metro-area Counties. My likely opponent in the Fall is none other than Republican Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer.



Do we really want more of her brand of reckless Republican representation in the State Senate in 2021? Absolutely NOT! But we need a strong, PROGRESSIVE, DEMOCRATIC voice to beat Kirkmeyer in November. Rest assured, I am working hard to represent the Democrats in SD-23 and be our Progressive voice going forward!

Please stay in touch, help build our campaign by volunteering or donating, and let us know what is important for you in this election. Do join us for our upcoming community Zooms by emailing GalinaFORSD23@gmail.com, so that we may send you a link. Our upcoming calls are as follows:

Tuesday, May 5th at 11 am:
on Green Energy Industry and Supporting the
New Era Workforce in the Age of AI and
Robotics

Thursday: May 7th at 11 am:
On serving our low-income and Latino families
with crisis solutions

I hope you are all staying healthy and alert in these challenging times!

Sincerely,

Dr. Galina Nicoll,
Candidate for CO State Senate, SD-23